

PlayStation® 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

OFFICIAL DETAILS

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EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON!

THE PUNISHER

We play 2004's most brutal game
Every feature in bloody detail!

REVIEWED!

HELL ON EARTH

Caution! Death awaits in Silent Hill

100%
CRASH
BACK!

Australia's first
review inside!

EXPOSED

SMACKDOWN! VS RAW

Wrestle against the best

5

PLAYABLE
DEMOS!
THE BEST DEMOS
GUARANTEED



ISSUE 33 NOVEMBER 2004
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STAR WARS™ BATTLEFRONT™



contents

ISSUE 33 NOVEMBER 2004



32

EXCLUSIVE



58

Our favourite bandicoot is back! Read Australia's very first review of Crash and Neo's brand-new platforming adventure, *Twinsanity*!

13

24



GTA: SAN ANDREAS
NEW SCREENS AND INFO ON SAN FIERRO!

SCARFACE

AREA 51

PREVIEWS

FEATURES

REGULARS

22	WRC 4 Sony's official rally sim speeds back looking better than ever
24	AREA 51 It's not the 50th sequel to <i>Area 51</i> but it does have a lot of crazy aliens!
26	WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW THQ continues layin' da smack down wid its latest grappler
28	SNOWBLIND It's like someone dropped <i>Deus Ex</i> in the middle of a warzone
30	DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY This surprise brawler has become one of the best beat 'em ups ever

32 GTA: SAN ANDREAS
This month we get to visit the second amazing city of San Andreas, San Feirro (the fictional recreation of San Francisco). Find out how it matches up to the real thing and take in the stunning new screens!

40 THE PUNISHER
Forget the plissweak movie, because the comic book legend finally gets a grisly game to be proud of. We travelled to sunny Illinois to get the scoop on this impressive shooter!

44 **MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION**
After last year's impressive *Midnight Club 2* was left choking on the dust of *Need for Speed Underground*, Rockstar has doubled its efforts and come back with one hell of a sweet ride!

48 **EYE TOY**
Easily the most innovative piece of gaming hardware we've seen in years, the EyeToy continues to evolve with a range of new software coming this Christmas. We check out everything from *Play 2* to *EyeToy: Chat!*

REVIEWS

54	SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES The sneakiest racoon on PS2 creeps back for a stellar sequel!
58	CRASH TWINSANITY Crash teams up with his nemesis Cortex for this hilarious sequel
62	SILENT HILL 4 Four times the fear!
64	STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT 16 players In the one battle!

66	NBA BALLERS NBA Jam meets <i>Fight Club</i> , with a bit of Bling Bling thrown in
68	VIEWTIFUL JOE Excellent 2D cartoon capers
72	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67 Welcome to the jungle, baby... you're gonna diliieeee!
71	VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE A squad-based take on the Vietnam war

72	ROCKY LEGENDS Quality <i>Rocky</i> boxing, plus Mr T's playable. What more do you need?
74	THE BARD'S TALE Hilarious dungeon and dragoning!
76	TERMINATOR 3: THE REDEMPTION The Governator strikes back!
78	DEMON STONE Swords, sex and sorcery – without the sex... unfortunately

40



THE PUNISHER

48



FYFTOY: PLAY 2

54



SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

74



THE BARD'S TALE



PlayStation.2

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Official PlayStation 2 Magazine
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For PlayStation 2 technical support and registration queries, please call 1300 365 911. Distributed throughout Australia by Gordon and Gotch. Printed in Australia by Webstar. Distributed throughout New Zealand by IMD.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Platformers, platformers, platformers! It's been so close to a decade since this genre has been so strongly represented in the game release lists and, as your premium source of PlayStation 2 Information, we've been all over it this month!

Back in the Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Master System days, "platformers" were all the rage and the top games of the time were headed up by two little sprites: Mario, a plumber, was one and Sonic, a blue hedgehog was the other! Then, PlayStation's very own Crash Bandicoot arrived on the scene and now with the likes of Spyro, Jak, Daxter, Ratchet, Clank and Sly – the rest is history.

With the "platform game" evolving from 2D into 3D, and despite the fact that there are now very few actual "platforms" that appear in any of the games they are more impressive than ever. Reflecting this, I'm sure fans will love this issue of OPS2 in particular.

Alongside full (and the first, I might add) reviews of Crash Twinsanity and Sly 2: Band of Thieves, OPS2's playable demo disc features awesome playable demos of both Ratchet & Clank 3: Up Your Arsenal and Spyro: A Hero's Tail. We haven't forgotten the Icing either, because we've squeezed in game footage of the very excellent Sly 2 as well.

Could 2004 prove to become "The Year of the Platformer"? They certainly are among the list of games to consistently deliver solid and lengthy gameplay – and this new batch is testament to that.

As a fan of videogames, give one (if not all) of these games a go. The genre after all, is in the heart and soul of all games that we know and love today.

RICHIE YOUNG
Editor

PlayStation.2

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DREAM JOB? (BESIDES OPS2!)

NARAYAN PATTISON
"I've always liked the idea of being a movie stunt double. Not looking like a movie star and not knowing how to do any stunts could be a problem but it's good to have a dream."



TRISTAN OGILVIE
"I'd still be a Crash Test Dummy. Not the car ones either, I mean I'd reform that band from the '90s. I co-wrote a lot of the lyrics. 'Mmm, mmm, mmm?' Yeah, that was one of mine."



MATTI PUCKERIDGE
"I really want to move to Los Angeles and become a pool cleaner. I was watching this movie the other night, and it was unbelievable what adventures they get into..."



PAUL FREW
"The adult film industry was good fun. I had to leave because some of the actresses were mixing business with pleasure. But maybe one day Hugh Mungus will return."



MICHELLE STARR
"Mattress tester. I could jump up and down on them all day without fear of reprimand, and then when I'm done, curl up and go to sleep. And get paid to do so! Boo-yah!"



SIMON WAN
"If it weren't for my love of magazines, I'd be playing in the Premier League for Liverpool. Money, fame and exotic women everywhere... but all up I'm pretty happy with my choice. I think."



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Turn to page 84 for all the details...

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on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS



Welcome to the latest *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* demo DVD. We're very happy to be able to bring you some huge exclusive playable demos this month, with our favourite being the one for *Ratchet & Clank 3: Up Your Arsenal*. We've got four separate playable stages, as well as three bits of video to look through. The *Spyro: A Hero's Tail* demo is of a similar size, with a variety of levels to run, glide and blast through, the *DJ Decks & FX* demo lets you try out almost every feature in the game, *Colin McRae Rally 2005* gives you a massively muddy drive across the UK, and Namco's *Crisis Zone* is so hectic it'll make your brain melt!

ED LOMAS

Associate Editor

To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **⊗** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* brings you something no other magazine can – playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you to try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From *GT3* and *MGS2* to *TimeSplitters 2* and *Final Fantasy X-2*, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

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Demo Disc Returns

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P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction
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RATCHET & CLANK 3: UP YOUR ARSENAL



DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOVEMBER
PLAYERS: 1-4 (FULL)
GAME 1-8 ONLINE



This huge demo gives you the chance to check out some of the variety that makes *Ratchet & Clank 3* so amazingly impressive. Check out the Battlefield stage to be dropped into the middle of a war, the Marcadia stage to try out some of the 3D exploration, the Quark Vld-Comic for some old-school side-on platform gaming, and Hoven Gorge to try out the split-screen multiplayer mode with up to four people at once. Complete the different demos to earn cheat codes which will work in the full game when it's released. On top of all this playable action, there are two bonus movies – one of Secret Agent Clank, and one showing the awesome eight-player online gameplay. Phew!

COLIN McRAE RALLY 2005



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: RACING
OUT: OCTOBER
PLAYERS: 1 (FULL)
GAME 1-8 ONLINE



The *Colin McRae Rally* series pretty much invented the modern rally game, and has been so successful it's been able to carry on even though the career of the man himself has taken a new direction. The latest addition to the series upgrades everything yet again, with an all-new damage system that sees the cars taking visible damage from even the smallest of scrapes. Our demo lets you burn through a full stage of the UK rally – make sure you listen carefully to your co-driver, as when he says "small gate" he really does mean "small gate"!



DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: SHOOTING
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

CRISIS ZONE

The latest in Namco's *Time Crisis* series changes things with the inclusion of machineguns. You still need to hide behind objects to reload and stay safe, while popping out from cover to take out enemies as quickly as possible. If you've got a G-Con light gun, you can use it with our demo, which sees you playing through the first stage on your mission to defeat the evil Derrick Lynch. Be careful to time your ducking so you don't cop a bullet to the chops and hurry up against anyone marked with a red circle – their shots will hit you if they fire.



OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH OPS2 LETS YOU PLAY

reel footage

The latest trailers and footage of upcoming PlayStation 2 games

DJ DECKS & FX

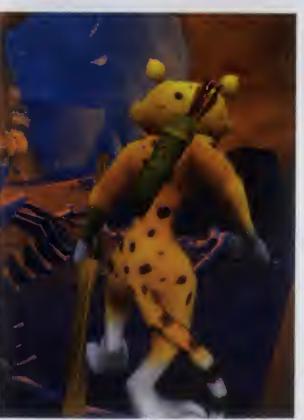


DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: MUSIC
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1



When your gaming brain is starting to ache from excessive play, try chilling out and learning to put together some smooth house sounds with Sony's innovative DJ Decks & FX. Our demo gives you the full load of kit to work with, as well as three records (out of the 90+ of the full game) – this amount of equipment would cost you thousands of dollars in real life! Start things off by checking out the Tutorial mode, as this will introduce you to all the pieces of technology available and give you a lesson in the basic mechanics of being a DJ. Within a matter of minutes you'll be looping, sampling, phasing, mixing and cutting like a pro! If you've got a USB headset (like the one included with SOCOM: US Navy SEALs), plug it in and you'll be able to listen to the tune you're cueing up, which comes in very handy. Choose Pro mode to play without any help, and also access the 'Resident DJ' option, where the PS2 will have a mix for you, giving you time to go to the bar for another drink and chat to some of the adoring DJ groupies who are by now queuing up to ask you out.

SPYRO: A HERO'S TAIL



Like our Ratchet & Clank 3 demo, this demo gives you the chance to check out a number of stages to give you an idea of how the various characters in Spyro: A Hero's Tail play. From the start, choose the Dragon Village tutorial to take Spyro for a spin around the main game hub, and complete it to unlock an egg-collecting mission where you get to glide around and explore your surroundings. Choose the Hunter stage to check out Spyro's leopard friend's bow and arrow skills, and have a go on the Sgt Byrd Maxi-Game (not a mini-game, apparently) to take the Sergeant for a rocket-powered flight around a volcano.



THE MAKING OF KILLZONE

See the tough 'research' that the Swedish developers of Sony's upcoming future-war smash had to go through to get the feel of being in the middle of an intense battle just right. Thankfully they took some time out to chat about the game's development in detail, too.



SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

Sly Raccoon is back to his thieving ways (but only to save the world, you understand) and he's brought a bunch of his mates along with him. Watch the trailer to get an idea of who's who and just how smart this adventure looks. Check out the review on page 54 for more.



RATCHET AND CLANK 3

In addition to our huge playable demo, we've got the latest Ratchet & Clank 3 promo trailer for you to have a squint at.



CRIMSON SEA 2

No, you didn't miss the first game – it was on Xbox only. This sequel looks way better anyway, with tons of alien-splatting action.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

All the menus and squares of a hardcore strategy game, and all the flashing, fighting and exploding of a fighting game.



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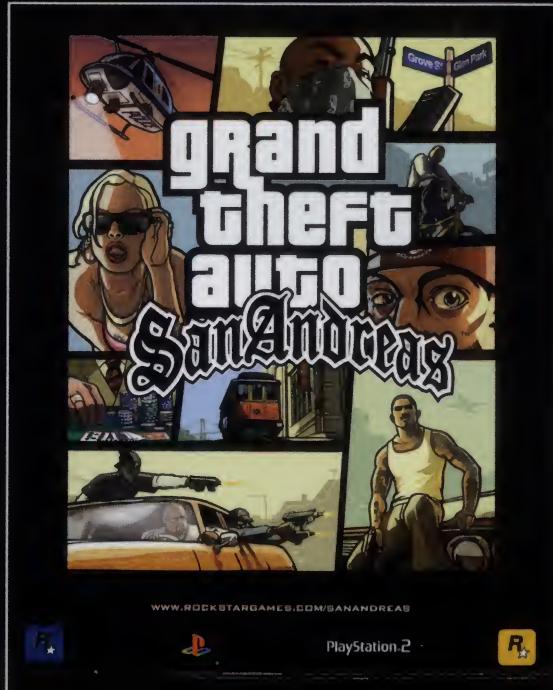
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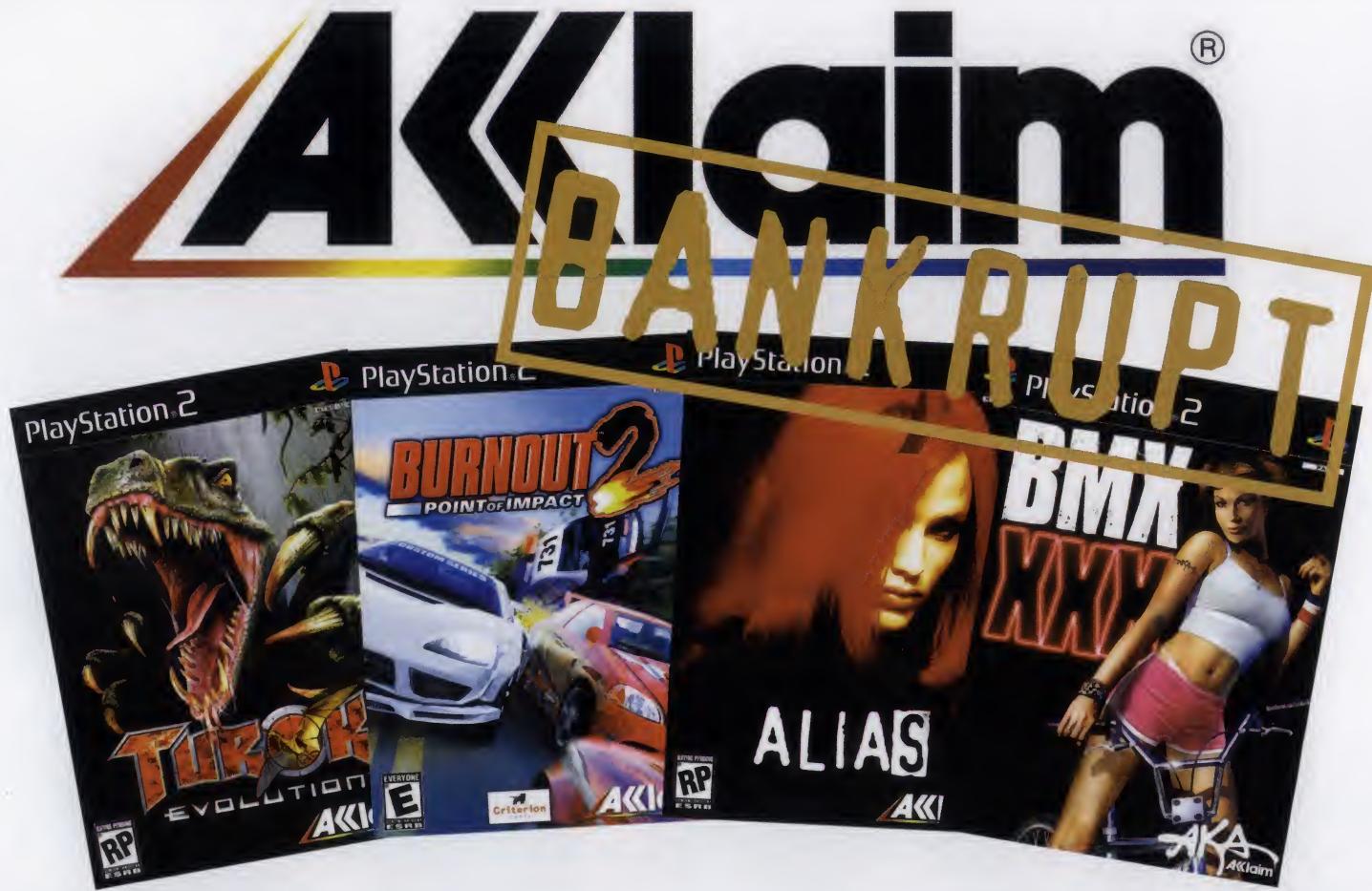


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ONCE WERE WARRIORS

After a long struggle Acclaim finally filed for bankruptcy last month

During the '90s Acclaim was one of the games industry's most successful publishers, but disasters like *Turok: Evolution* and a string of lacklustre releases led to mounting debts that forced the company to file for bankruptcy on 27 August.

Acclaim was at its most successful in the early '90s with blockbuster Super Nintendo releases like *Mortal Kombat* and *NBA Jam*. The publisher continued to do well during the PSone and Nintendo 64 generation with popular videogame releases like *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, *Dave Mirra BMX*, *Shadowman* and various *South Park* titles.

Things began to go pear-shaped for Acclaim fairly quickly after the PS2 was released. Disappointing sequels like *Shadowman: 2nd Coming* and *Dave Mirra BMX 2* (which was ruined after Activision bought the original development team) got the publisher off

to a rocky start. Then in 2002 disaster struck when Acclaim staked everything on the success of *Turok: Evolution*. Acclaim piled millions of dollars into elaborate marketing, printed millions of discs and waited for the money to flood in. Unfortunately the game was slammed critically and ignored publicly, leaving Acclaim with crippling debts.

Acclaim did try to climb out of this hole. To its credit it was responsible for a handful of successful titles, and the Australian office was especially savvy with the development of its AFL games but these hits were overwhelmed by a string of turkeys. Poor performers like *BMX XXX*, *Gladiator*, *Urban Freestyle Soccer* and *Alias* failed to do anything to reverse the company's debts.

After Acclaim was unable to secure additional funding, the publisher filed for bankruptcy in late August. The company will be liquidated in an attempt to settle

its \$100 million (US) debts. With little to no warning Acclaim staff in all territories were told to clean out their desks and that they would have to seek government help to recover their redundancy payments. Ironically, the company's bankruptcy occurred just two

weeks before Acclaim's promising racer *Juiced* was due to be released – a game that may well have been successful enough to get the publisher back on track. There's no word yet on a new publisher and release date for *Juiced* but an early 2005 release is likely. **NP**



Acclaim's Melbourne office is already up for sale

GO BUSH!

IT EXISTS! TASSIE TIGER FOUND

Krome unleashes (weird-looking) Aussie animal to the platforming world

Queensland videogame developer Krome has been hard at work on *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue*. After a first-hand demonstration with John Passfield, Krome's Director of Development, the game is looking promising. Geared toward younger gamers (even more so than the original), *Bush Rescue* will also feature far more variety while still retaining a worthy element of challenge.

Kicking off where the original finished, *Bush Rescue* begins with Ty's enemy Evil Boss Cass escaping from Currawong Jail. So, surprise surprise,

it's up to Ty, his closest mates and his trusty arsenal of boomerangs (he's got 21 in total) to get him back in there! What's most exciting is the level of action there is. Krome is looking to pack in loads of enemies, puzzles, more than 50 missions, helicopters and submarines, as well as some brand-new kart-racing levels. All this gameplay will be set in an impressive free-roaming environment.

At this stage, the game is looking solid, if a little chunky at times. We are a little perplexed though by Ty himself. He looks nothing like the Tasmanian Tigers we're used to! **RY**



MOVIE MURMURS

The latest news and rumours in the world of film and DVD

GREEN LIGHT FOR HULK SEQUEL

Although critics and audiences were largely unimpressed with the last flick, Ang Lee is persevering with production on *Hulk 2*. The next movie is rumoured to see The Hulk performing in a more superhero capacity with a tussle against arch nemesis The Leader. Original star Eric Bana has yet to see a script but is interested in signing on.

KONG IS KING

Principle photography began last month in New Zealand on Peter Jackson's eagerly awaited remake of the classic *King Kong* film. Skip over to www.kongiskong.net to check out Jackson introducing the movie from the set. *King Kong* stars Naomi Watts, Adrien Brody, Jack Black and Andy Serkis and is due to be released Christmas next year.



KILLER!

AL PACINO ON PS2

Vivendi takes on the crime-sim genre with Scarface

It was *Scarface*, the masterpiece gangster movie that paved the way for the countless clones that followed and inspired videogames like that the *Grand Theft Auto* series and *True Crime*. Now, Vivendi is set to resurrect *Scarface* as it recreates the ruthless Miami underworld for our trusty PlayStation 2.

Unsurprisingly, Tony Montana (played by Al Pacino in the movie) will play the lead

character in the game. Developed by Radical Games (whose most noteworthy releases have been *The Hulk* and *The Simpsons: Hit and Run*), *Scarface* is being described as a third-person action shooter. Matched with a game engine like the one used in *Hit and Run*, the *Scarface* world is ruthless, tough and menacing – perfect fodder for a crime-sim. It's unknown yet whether Pacino will be directly involved in

the game's development, but we expect the game itself to take a harder line than the *Grand Theft Auto* games.

Michael Pole, Executive Vice President, Worldwide Studios for Vivendi Universal Games said, "Having the chance to now bring gamers the authentic experience is an opportunity and challenge we are looking forward to". *Scarface* will be finished in mid-2005. **RY**



FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD ZOMBIES

Billed as a 'romantic comedy with zombies' *Shaun of the Dead* revolves around recently dumped Shaun's struggle to win back his girlfriend. Unfortunately the streets are filled with armies of the undead. The movie's comedy comes from the fact that unlike most zombie killers, Shaun is a regular bloke who attacks the undead with things like his record collection and his *TimeSplitters 2* skills. *Shaun of the Dead* shambles into cinemas later this month.

THE LEGEND OF WILL FERRELL

PS2 was lucky enough to sneak into a preview screening of *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, in a similar style to Will Ferrell's *Old School* (the greatest comedy ever made, according to Narayan). *Anchorman* follows a group dim-witted blokes as they blunder along this time through the world of 70s broadcast news in San Diego. Hitting cinemas in October, *Anchorman* is packed with quality slapstick gags and Will Ferrell's impeccable delivery.



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STARR REPORT

Game, advanced

I've never been an enormous fan of the peripheral. Yes, I like crazy stuff, and I'm not averse to trying something new, but usually I like my gaming straight-up and one way, unless I'm gaming with mates. Most gamers I know are the same - the toys stay on the shelf for solo sessions.

None of this explains the recent rise in the popularity of the peripheral. Or perhaps it does. Not too many years ago, I ran out and bought dance mats for games parties. Still have them. Still use them, from time to time. Not only is it a really good workout for the average couch potato, it's a helluva lot of fun... but not something I'd want to do on my own.

Which brings us to the crux of the matter. The human animal is a social one. While we enjoy our solo gaming, sometimes we just have to get a group together, boast of our prowess, and take a turn enduring crushing defeat at *Dancing Stage*.

The resounding successes of *EyeToy: Play* and *SingStar* are a testament to this. Both games have sold a phenomenal number of units. But it is not the peripheral alone that is accountable. Both games are something that anyone can pick up and play. The peripheral itself is relatively compact and can easily fit in with one's current lounge room setup. In both cases, the game itself came packaged with the necessary additional hardware, making a cheaper toy than might otherwise be had. The games themselves are easy to play, and immediately accessible to the casual gamer. And finally, you get to look like a total spaz in front of your friends while you're playing - and isn't that the main thing?

Gaming as a social activity is on the rise, but there is more to it than that. With toys like dance mats, light guns, microphones and motion-sensitive cameras, gaming is coming out of the realm of the purely cerebral and instinctive and into the physical. The lines between where the game ends and the body begins are becoming blurred. It's no longer solely about pressing the right buttons in the right combination, and the games are coming out of the screen and living in us.

It's still early days yet, and we've not yet seen a tenth of what the end capabilities are. At the moment, peripherals have still to pass into the realm of an in-depth gaming experience. But next time you're passing an arcade, take a few minutes and jump on a dance machine or pick up a light rifle, or take a turn on a racing simulator. It won't offer any profound revelations, but you may gain a new perspective to ponder on the way we relate to our games, and the ways in which we play them.

MICHELLE STARR
Games Writer

GORGEOUS GAMING

STOOD UP

Guy Game's release in question...



If last month's news about *The Guy Game* got your heart racing then this month's news is sure to leave you as heartbroken as a monkey who's peeled his last banana. For those who don't remember, *The Guy Game* is a FMV quiz show that was filmed during American Spring Break last year and stars some of the hottest college students in the world. Contestants, ie. you, are given questions to answer with rewards consisting of these girls participating in wet t-shirt

competitions, topless jump rope challenges and other events that include ingredients like lots of whipped cream, KY jelly and chocolate syrup.

The bad news is that no Aussie distributor has yet stepped forward to handle the local release of what looks like being one of the funniest games ever. OPS2 is encouraging you to fight for right to see boobies by going to www.guygame.com and demanding an Aussie release. Go on, get writing. **PF**

PATCHY

KILL SOCOM CHEATERS!

Patch to be released to kill off wise-guy SOCOM II players online



Any SOCOM II player who's ventured online for some cyberspace competition will be well aware that some opponents are known to take liberty and use some glitches in the code to their unsporting advantage.

Zipper Interactive, SOCOM II's developer has taken steps to develop a downloadable patch to fix the problem. The move is in direct response to player feedback regarding a few issues when the game is taken online.

Problems that have arisen include the parameters set for voting

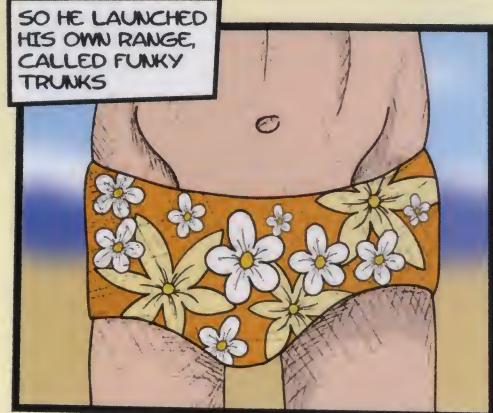
off opposing players and issues surrounding disconnecting players, but the most pressing priority that will be addressed is to eradicate the ability of gamers to take advantage of particular "soft spots" within the code allowing them to move off the screen or behind some objects. These "spots" allow them to continue firing, but they are also protected by invisible shields.

At the time of going to press, local Sony representatives were unable to confirm when the patch will be available locally but OPS2, as usual, is on the case. **KW**

DUNCAN ALWAYS LOVED HIS DAD'S OLD SWIMMERS



SO HE LAUNCHED HIS OWN RANGE, CALLED FUNKY TRUNKS



WILL DUNCAN CONQUER THE WORLD WITH HIS SWIMWEAR?



**YOU DECIDE.
VOTE & YOU COULD WIN!**

Duncan is competing against 5 other finalists to win a \$50,000 NESCAFE BIG BREAK. Visit www.nescafebigbreak.com.au to get Duncan's full story.

To help him win, vote online or SMS "Duncan" to 1994 3355.

By voting you could win a share of over \$20,000 worth of prizes plus if you vote for the NESCAFE BIG BREAK winner, you'll go in the draw for \$5,000!



NESCAFE. Big Break.

Since 1990

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STAR TREK WINNERS

Thanks for all the "Star Trek Giveaway" entries that flooded in for our competition in Issue #31. Almost every entry we received correctly spotted The Doctor standing on the side of the road in the *Juiced* screenshot on page 59, so we might have to make it a bit tougher next issue. The six lucky readers who will be beaming Star Trek Season Two DVDs to are: M Kinsela (NSW), S Loule (WA), B Lee (NT), N Broome (NSW), S Adam (VIC), J Hall (NZ).



BLACK EYED PEAS LOVE URBZ

The Black Eyed Peas have agreed to star in and release tracks exclusively for EA's forthcoming game *The Urbz*. While other stars have appeared in and released material exclusive to games in the past, Fergie and Co have taken the trend to new heights. Fans of the Peas will need to treat *The Urbz* as a "must-have" – something that EA is clearly banking on. The game will feature no fewer than nine exclusive versions of tracks from their new album, *Monkey Business*. On top of that every member has been digitised to appear in the game. Along with Fergie, Will.i.Am, Taboo and Apl.de.Ap will appear as musicians in the game as they give you the lowdown on being "hip".

THE CANDYMAN CAN

Take 2 has snared the rights to the Warner Brothers remake of the 1971 film *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. With Tim Burton at the helm, and Johnny Depp on board as Willy Wonka there's a good chance the film will avoid being a tragedy, but there's been very little information released about the game itself. Aside from the fact it's expected to ship with the release of the film, how it looks and what it plays like is as much a mystery as where all the female Oompa Loompas went.



ALL HANDS ON DECK

With World War II being a veritable stomping ground for videogames in recent years it's no surprise SCI has announced *Battlestations: Midway*. An air, sea and land combat game, *Battlestations* will allow you to assume a number of important roles in the battle, switching between units at critical stages. SCI has also hinted at some robust multiplayer action. If it plays half as good as it looks, it'll be pinning that coveted Medal of Honour to its digital chest.

loading...

IT'S MAGIC

ANOTHER CHAMPION EFFORT

Ubisoft readies Norrath sequel

Finished with *Champions of Norrath*? Well, start sharpening those axes again because Snowblind Studios is busy forging a sequel.

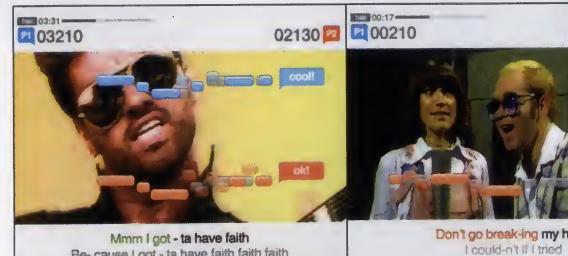
Champions: Return to Arms will be packed to the gills with new features like two new playable races, new weapons and items, a deeper multiplayer experience and more online options.

Return to Arms will also feature a non-linear plot which will allow you to ally with the forces of good or evil and import characters from the original game. With an estimated 100 hours of gameplay for each character, you should start fluffing those cushions on your lounge ready for early next year. **LR**



The Ice Queen's husband, Coolio, makes a cameo

BIG LUNGS



PARTY ON MIKE!

SingStar Encore!

OPS2 can finally reveal the details surrounding *SingStar Party* – the first disc to be released since the original *SingStar* changed lounge rooms all over the country. *SingStar Party* is not merely a disc with new tracks – as many believed it would be. It is set to build on the already brilliant first disc – and apart from the 30 new tracks – the game will also include a whole host of new multiplayer modes. There are new Duet and

Pass the Mic modes that will give even greater intensity to lounge room rivalries. Interestingly, the two discs will also be "compatible" meaning you will be able to automatically update your collection from the original disc – so you will have 60 all up in your carousel. *SingStar Party*'s track list includes hits like: Bill Withers "Ain't No Sunshine", Bob Marley "No Woman No Cry", Buggles "Video Killed The Radio Star", Busted "Year 3000", Cyndi Lauper



"Girls Just Wanna Have Fun", Destiny's Child "Survivor", Dido "White Flag", Elton John & Kiki Dee "Don't Go Breaking My Heart", Elvis "Way Down", Franz Ferdinand "Take Me Out", George Michael "Faith", Kylie Minogue "I Should Be So Lucky", Pink "Just Like A Pill", Spice Girls "Who Do You Think You Are", The Foundations "Build Me Up Buttercup" and Tiffany "I Think We're Alone Now". Expect *SingStar Party* next month. **RY**

the top ten

THINGS WE DON'T WANT TO SEE GAME SIMS OF

1. PEAK HOUR TRAFFIC

All the excitement of gridlock without the car fumes. See if you can hammer the horn enough to get the confused granny in front of you to make it through a packed intersection in three light changes instead of four.

2. BEING HUNGOVER

You lose health points for any loud noises you hear and just getting your character to walk in a straight line is a challenge. The 'toilet bowl throw-up' and the 'morning after raw egg shake' mini-games are guaranteed to be interesting.

3. THE TERMINAL

Tom Hanks' latest epic sees him starring in the true-life story of a man who spends six years living in an airport departure lounge. This is one Hollywood blockbuster we really hope they don't cash in on.

4. BREAKING UP WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND

It's just like the real thing except you don't get to have any sex beforehand.

5. GOING TO THE GYM

Spend hours lifting weights, hitting the treadmill and drink powershakes to build the perfect body for your PlayStation character, while your real body bulks out to giant fat ass proportions.

6. BOWEL MANAGEMENT

To keep your character regular and in and out of the bathroom in under five minutes you'll have to be disciplined and eat a lot of fibre. Can you do it or will you succumb to the temptation of fatty foods and pay the price by facing off against the Backed-up Bog Boss?

7. EXTREME GARBAGE MAN

Pull off slick moves like the '180 wheelie bin nose grab' or the 'banana skin slip with air' while emptying garbage bins. Just add in Activision's usual 'extreme' attitude, plus a grunge rock soundtrack, and you just know this baby will sell.

8. HOUSEHOLD CHORES

We bet you didn't think cleaning the toilet and vacuuming the carpet could be fun? Nope, neither do we.

9. SCHOOL EXAMS

Thousands of real life text books have been scanned in and used in this game for authenticity. If you don't pass the tests you face the boredom of the detention room bonus level but even if you win, you've lost because you just paid money to play a videogame about studying for made-up exams.

10. TRAIN DRIVING

You race a commuter train down the tracks at crazy speeds of 10-15kmph and you don't have to worry about turning or anything because the train is on-rails. Oh, wait... they did that already.



SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

TimeSplitters: Future Perfect blows us away!

As a homage to the first boss battle in TS2 the attack chopper returns in the sequel

The improved enemy AI knows to seek out useful parts of the terrain to use as sniper points



The enhanced graphics engine is capable of rendering realistic smoke and fog

As well as featuring improved reloading animations, each weapon is true to the time period

FREE DVDS

BUFF YOURSELF UP

Find Buffy and win her DVDs!



Time to give your eyes another workout. This month, that saucy wench Buffy the Vampire Slayer has given the bloodsuckers the slip and hidden herself somewhere in our magazine. To celebrate the release of the *Buffy* Celebration pack (on sale 13 October) 20th Century Fox Home

Entertainment has given us three sets of Seasons 1-7 to giveaway to three lucky readers. To be in the running to win one of these DVD packs you just need to scan through the mag and find the other hidden picture of Buffy and let us know which page she's hidden on. Go get her! **NP**

WIN!

HOW TO ENTER — Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Buffy Giveaway" in the subject line, enter on our website www.derwenthoward.com.au or send envelopes via snail mail to: OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 3 November, 2004. This comp is also open to NZ residents.

CHRIS AND HIS MATES DREAMED OF BECOMING ROCK STARS



SO THEY PUT DOWN THEIR BEERS, PICKED UP THEIR GUITARS, AND FORMED THE HOVERCRAFTS



WILL THEIR DREAMS TAKE OFF?



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PS2 TOP 10 GAMES CHART

1



ATHENS 2004 continues to go strong in the charts even after the real Olympics are well and truly over. Its addictive multiplayer gameplay may just be enough to give this game better legs than Cathy Freeman.

2



SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67 successfully takes down *Conflict: Vietnam* and *Vietcong: Purple Haze* to be the dominant Vietnam war shooter. How much of its popularity has to do with the controversial content is unknown though.

3



SINGSTAR is proving that karaoke can be as fun as any PS2 game – especially when a few of your mates come around. And with *SingStar Party* just around the corner it looks like karaoke will be ruling the charts for a long time to come.

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4	GTA: Vice City	Adventure	Take 2
5	Crash Nitro Kart	Racing	Vivendi
6	Driv3r	Adventure	Atari
7	Shrek 2	Action	Activision
8	Spider-Man 2	Adventure	Activision
9	Fight Night	Sports	EA
10	America's 10 Most Wanted	Shooting	Red Ant

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

OCTOBER

Backyard Wrestling 2	Wrestling	Atari
Crash Twinsanity	Adventure	Vivendi
Def Jam: Fight for NY	Fighting	EA
FIFA 2005	Sports	EA
Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	RPG	EA
Madden 2005	Sports	EA
NBA Ballers	Sports	Red Ant
NBA Live 2005	Sports	EA
NHL 2005	Sports	EA
Psi-Ops	Adventure	Red Ant
Rocky Legends	Sports	Ubisoft
Silent Hill 4	Horror	Atari
Sly 2: Band of Thieves	Adventure	SCEA
The Bard's Tale	Adventure	THQ
This is Soccer 2005	Sports	SCEA
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2	Action	EA
Under the Skin	Action	THQ
V8 Supercars 2	Racing	Atari
Viewtiful Joe	Action	THQ
X-Men Legends	Adventure	Activision

NOVEMBER

EyeToy: Play 2	Party game	SCEA
Killzone	FPS	SCEA
Ghost Recon 2	Shooter	Ubisoft
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	FPS	EA
Gran Turismo 4	Racing	SCEA
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	Adventure	Take 2
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Racing	Take 2
Need for Speed Underground 2	Racing	EA
Playboy: The Mansion	Simulation	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Adventure	Ubisoft
Ratchet & Clank 3	Adventure	SCEA
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	Adventure	Vivendi
The Getaway: Black Monday	Adventure	SCEA
The Incredibles	Adventure	THQ
The Urbz: Sims in the City	Family sim	EA
Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Sports	Activision
WWE Smackdown Vs Raw	Wrestling	THQ

DECEMBER/EARLY 2005

Jak 3	Adventure	SCEA
Metal Gear Solid 3	Adventure	Atari
Rugby 2005	Sports	EA
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	FPS	EA



loading...

ROLLING THUNDER

ROLL UP, ROLL UP

Take aim on this mighty shooter

SCI has announced the tentatively titled *Roll Call*, an FPS in development at Argonaut Games. Set in the near future, you take control of former soldier Nick Mason. Returning home he finds

his local town has been completely overrun by gang warfare and immediately joins the G18 Counter Gang Division. The division has emergency powers over the police, fire and ambulance services and you'll

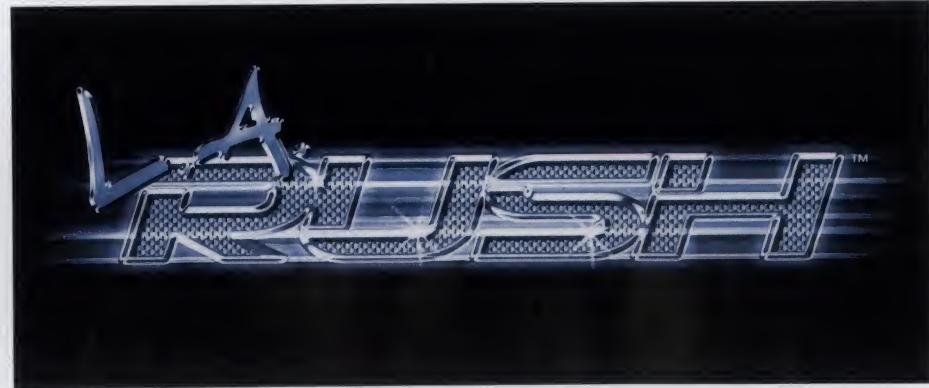
need them as you fight to save people's lives and property. *Roll Call* will feature online play and the ability to use voice commands to issue orders. Expect *Roll Call* to be raising its hand next year. **LR**



LA LA LA

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

Midway hits back with LA Rush



The makers behind the wildly popular Nintendo 64 arcade racer *San Francisco Rush* are at it again. While *OPS2* isn't entirely sure what all the fuss was about back then, Midway's new game, *LA Rush*, looks to deliver on the promise seen in the earlier game, and then some.

LA Rush is being developed with Midway's brand-new

technology, which it believes will make capturing the sights and suburbs of Los Angeles much more efficient. The diversity of LA will not go unnoticed. The plush areas of Beverly Hills, the ghettos of Compton, Hollywood, LAX and the seaside suburb of Santa Monica will all be instantly recognisable. Better still, Midway has promised that they'll also be fully destructible!

LA Rush will be free roaming with a mission-based structure – so there will probably be a strong adventure focus in the game. Police pursuits, traffic, short-cuts and jumps will also be included, so you'll be able to take any of the 50 licensed cars to the max all over town. *OPS2* will be the first magazine to get under the hood and go hands-on with this sweet ride! **RY**

BUSTED!

SAY 'NO' TO DRUGS...

...and 'Yes' to Midway's NARC



Nicotine, valium, Vicodin, marijuana, ecstasy and alcohol. Sure, they may have made for some catchy lyrics in that Queens Of The Stone Age song, but by no means are they the ingredients of a good time, kids – you should be spending your time getting 'high scores' rather than 'scoring highs'.

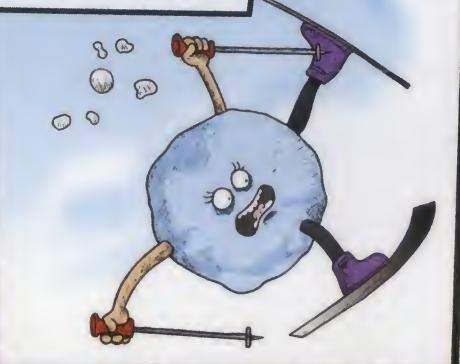
The morals of Midway's forthcoming action remake NARC seem to be a little ambiguous. You alternate between controlling two cops trying to stamp out drug pushing and trafficking on the streets, while at the same time

taking drugs yourself, including marijuana and ecstasy, in order to 'enhance' your skills and awareness. Hmm.

However, taking too many drugs does result in addiction – meaning you get the shakes, pass out and even get kicked off the force, leaving you to solve random crimes vigilante-style in an effort to get your badge back.

We can't confirm at this stage whether or not you can actually get 'the munchies', but we'll be following the progress of this game and its potential battle with the OFLC in the coming months. ▶ TO

KATIE SPENT A LOT OF TIME ON HER SKIS AND ON HER BUM



BUT SHE PERSEVERED AND BECAME THE AUSSIE CROSS COUNTRY SKIING CHAMPION



WILL KATIE'S DREAM OF AN OLYMPIC MEDAL COME TRUE?



START SAVING!

MORE PRICEY GAMES

EA warns of PS3 difficulties

Because of the increasingly complex nature of videogame programming, EA's vice president Jeff Brown has warned that development costs could escalate by as much as 200 per cent on the PlayStation 3. Brown described these tougher next generation costs as a being like a forest fire, in that "it makes the healthy trees stronger, but burns away the weeds". Although many of the smaller developers wouldn't appreciate being described as weeds, it's hard to fault EA's logic. It's a harsh reality that the smaller development houses are going to have a much tougher time surviving during the next generation. Disappointingly, these increased costs do mean we're going to see a lot more 'safe' games like licensed titles and sequels dominating the PlayStation 3 launch line-up. ▶ NP

CEL-SHOW

CEL-SHADING ON TV

Viewtiful Joe cartoon hits Japan

Viewtiful Joe is one hot property at the moment. As well as the PlayStation 2 game this month and its sequel later in the year, Viewtiful Joe fans in Japan are about to be treated to the debut of his very own cartoon show. Taking its cue from the style of Who Framed Roger Rabbit?

(where cartoon characters could wander around the real world) Joe has become a movie star himself. The cartoon's mix of high action and parody-filled humour is clearly intended to allow Viewtiful Joe to appeal to as large an audience as possible. Expect a local release soon. ▶ NP



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feedback

We spend the whole magazine talking to you – now it's your turn!

SPEAK TO US!

Come on, we know you guys are bursting to get involved. Share your thoughts with the nation's PlayStation 2 owners in the new, Improved Feedback section and you could win an exclusive Atari T-shirt! Write to us on paper or on a computer:

OPS2 Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au



FIGHTING FAT

To my dearest OPS2 writers,

Whilst reading through your utterly fabulous magazine I had a bizarre thought, and I would like to know your view. In the upcoming smash hit *Grand Theft Auto San Andreas* there may be a few small problems we, the gamers, will have to deal with. One such problem is the character customisation. With this terrific new feature I find some irony, in that while we are going to be getting our character CJ looking his best and bad-assed, we will be sitting on our round backsides and accumulating months of not exercising and continuous snacking. So while we are getting CJ nice and fit and cool-looking we ourselves will be doing the opposite. This is where the irony comes in. I'm not bitching or anything, cause I will be among the millions and millions of fans playing the game.

It also raises the issue of whether we will have time for other titles, which you touched upon in last month's issue. This could be a good or a bad thing – missing out on being the first on the block to play *Killzone* or *Metal Gear Solid 3* would be a pity, but having a game to play until these titles go Platinum would be very good for gamers and their wallets. Well that's my view on things, keep up the good work.

Drew C, via email

PS. If I win the shirt can I have it in XXL just to be prepared for the future?

Good point. This is why OPS2 endorses a balanced gaming diet consisting of every possible genre of game being played at least once a week, old titles being taken off the shelf and given a quick play regularly to keep them in shape, and jogs from the TV to the toilet every few hours during extended gaming sessions. One XXL Atari t-shirt coming right atcha!



OPS2 chart

Some games mags are written by people who don't really play games, but not OPS2 – we play games so much here that we hardly have time to make the mag! Here's what's been making us late this month.



1. BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

Naz was first to get all the race golds, Ed was first to get all the crash golds... and they both got serious eye problems and bad headaches at the same time.



2. MASHED

Mashed has taken over from *Soul Calibur II* as the lunchtime stress-reliever of choice, with new recruits rushing to the games room every day to join the fun.



3. V8 SUPERCARS 2

It's racing games all the way at the moment, with Codemasters' excellent high-powered racer sapping every remaining second of our spare time.

A CRIMINAL WRITES...

Kia Ora (that's hello in Maori), it was great to read your rather lengthy article about the upcoming *Grand Theft Auto* game (back in the July '04 issue). It really got my juices flowing. I was just tearing into it at the store when I was caught by undercover store security. They advised me not to unseal the pages before I bought it. So, in good old *Grand Theft Auto* fashion I tucked it under my shirt and went on my merry way. Isn't it cool that they now let you use computers in prison to send your email?

Nuh, I'm only kidding. Anyway, your article did lead me to purchase (with stolen cash) *GTA: Vice City*, my very first *GTA* experience. To say the least, it blew me away. Games like these are the reason why I don't do it for real. At least after a good gaming session I'm still a free man. And speaking about free – I am single. Probably because I have the tendency to randomly blow a bikini clad woman away with my powerful shotgun.

Anyway, what all this writing is leading up to is the fact that I want to thank you great people at OPS2 for introducing me to the wonders of *GTA*. Also, while I'm at it, I want to mention that your mag is one of the highlights of the month for me. The only thing that would be better than your mag is if we're free! I am seriously considering subscribing to OPS2 (just

beware of the cheque I send).

Keep up the good work (or else).

Michael, via email

Very happy to be of assistance, Michael.

A ONE-EYED FANBOY WRITES...

In Cameron Urquhart's letter in issue 31, he referred to his "heathen GameCube friend". He was referring to me. I would like to say that I am not some one-eyed Nintendo fanboy, and I am in fact saving up my moolah to buy a PS2 and *San Andreas* when it hits the shelves. So, in conclusion, my friend is a dirty liar and you should ignore anything else he sends you.

Steve MacLean, via email

Thanks for the info, Steve. Our postman has been instructed to burn anything we receive from Cameron on sight, so we won't be subjected to his evil lies ever again. Oh, and welcome to the wonderful world of PlayStation 2.

ONLINE ADVERTISING

Hey peoples,

Can you tell me why Sony is not marketing or advertising the online functions of its machine? I am online with my PS2 and think it's tops, but I would like Sony to

encourage as many new people to climb aboard as possible. Don't get me wrong, I love the artsy-fartsy TV ad with the billions of people becoming a giant human pyramid, but Sony also needs to show people what the hell the games are all about.

Also can you tell me why no reviews in mags seem to include assessments of online play, like lag, comms, etc. You guys should start a feature in your reviews and rate games for their online features. It would only have to be a small section in the normal review with a score out of 10, pros, cons and so on. I realise that this letter will probably not be printed as most mags only print the arse-kissing letters, but I feel I am only trying to help make my reading experience even better. Thanks guys.

Memumza Bighor, via email

The difficulty with advertising PS2's online features in Australia is that not everybody lives in a region which can get broadband. As such, Sony is aiming to attract the interest of hardcore gamers such as yourself first; people who use the Internet regularly and read our magazine, and will go on to spread the word of how fantastic online gaming is. The "human pyramid" advert is just part of Sony's overall marketing campaign – remember that online PlayStation gaming is still a



cuttings

Little bits of letters that the dog sicked up by the sofa

NOT GUD SPELIN

...and last of all what credentials do you need to get such a good job like a degree in Jemilism

Name withheld, via email

Step one – pay more attention in English class...

POSTER BOY

Hi, I like your mag and the demos but I would like it even more if it came with a poster because I collect a lot of posters.

Sebastian D'Alonzo, via email

You could always cut the screenshots out and use those as posters... just really small posters for a rabbit hutch or doll's house.

GET AWAY FROM US!

I noticed in issue 31 that Michael McNab sent in his ideas on his perfect game. Well, here's mine. Take GTA: San Andreas and add some other lifelike things – children and animals, especially cows. I love to run them over.

Richard Gilbert, via email

You are officially the scariest reader we've heard from this month. Congratulations.

DOOM AND GLOOM

Is Doom 3 ever going to be released on PS2? And don't say "but PS2 has Killzone coming" cause this is Doom we're talking about.

b3nje, via email

No... but PS2 has Killzone coming.

INSTANT DETENTION

Hi, my name's Mathew Bates and I would like to know why PlayStation don't make Halo?

Mathew Bates, via email

Mate, we said last month that the next person to ask that question would have to write out "Microsoft owns Halo" 1000 times. We weren't joking – get them to us by this time next week or you're in trouble. By the way, PS2 has Killzone coming.

WE BE CLEVER

I just want to say how smart you are.

Joseph Callingham, via email

Thanks, mate! We like you!

relatively new concept, and the advertising will change and grow over time. As for us talking about a game's online functions in our reviews, this is also very difficult as we're usually reviewing games many months before they go on sale, so there isn't anyone else with the game for us to test it against! We're hopefully going to start reviewing games' online features in detail a few months after they get officially released, once we can give them a proper thrashing against you lot!

SHORT BUT SWEET

Howdy guys and girls. Narayan you're funny as **** and Michelle you're hot. Can I have a game now? Even a s***ty one will do. As long as it's not Bambi 2. That thing sucks.

CJ, via email

Sure thing. We're sending you a copy of our favourite game at the moment – it's called Noughts & Crosses. We've even made the first move for you.

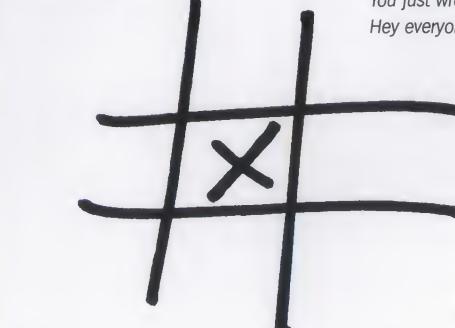
WHY ME?

G'day Legends,

I am writing with grief-laden hands and a tear trickling down my cheek. My PS2 (soul-mate) is on its last legs. DVDs refuse to play even when I give my machine a morale-boosting kiss. As for games, well, I have to resort to tricks like resetting, ejecting and resetting, patting and hugging then resetting. If I'm lucky the son of a gun will play for half an hour max before black screen death. Is there a charity out there for poor souls like me? I haven't done anything wrong. I am purely loyal to "The One" console. I just need gaming glory – not too much to ask, one might think.

Perhaps other people like myself could start said charity to get demoralised PlayStation 2s back on their feet. Maybe even begin the training of "Electronic Psychologists" to convince the suckers to work, telling them everything's okay? Please OPS2, whom I love so much, shed some light on a broken man's darkened heart.

Gus, via email



Lucky reader 'CJ' wins this awesome game for his letter

You've got a few options here. You can either stay with your PS2 through its twilight years, playing with it daily, letting it know how much you love it and, if it does eventually decide to completely pack in, bury it in your back garden. A small funeral service of some sort will often help ease your pain around this time. Alternately, you could call Sony's Technical Support line on 1300 365 911 and find out what the experts reckon you should do.

BLOODY NIT-PICKER

Hi everybody! All you people at OPS2 are downright legends! One thing kinda caught my eye in your current issue in the bit titled 'The Time of Your Life'. A small column was written about Silent Hill 2 saying how James turns on a bath faucet only to have it seep out with blood and, being the Silent Hill veteran that I am, it was obvious that the scene is from Silent Hill 3 with Heather turning on the bath faucet in the normal office building, not James in Silent Hill 2.

But it's really no big deal. We all make the occasional mistake, no? Or maybe it wasn't a mistake at all but just a hoax to see how many people would point that out so all of you could have a jolly good laugh! HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA-GHHHK! (chokes on account of Lego man stuck in teeth)

Nicolas Paredes, Adelaide SA

Er... yeah, it was a hoax. Now get away from us, you weirdo!

HARDER! HARDER!

Hey guys, I'm just writing to tell you how pissed off I am when it comes to difficulty levels in sporting games. Recently I bought Rugby 2004 and the difficulty levels are all too easy. When I read the word 'hard' I expect the game to get at least a little more difficult. When set a match on hard I still always win by 50 points (on average)! I just thought that you could have a word or two with EA and it could be an improvement in their next football game.

John, NSW

You just wrote in to brag, didn't you? Hey everyone – John's brilliant at games!

MONICA LOVED HER CLOTHES BUT HATED HER BOYFRIEND'S



SO SHE AND HER BEST FRIEND AMELIA STARTED THEIR OWN MENSWEAR LABEL 'PHEIFFER'.



WILL MONICA AND AMELIA BE THE NEXT BIG THING IN FASHION?



**YOU DECIDE.
VOTE & YOU COULD WIN!**

Monica is competing against 5 other finalists to win a \$50,000 NESCAFE BIG BREAK. Visit www.nescafebigbreak.com.au to get Monica's full story.

To help her win, vote online or SMS "Monica" to 1994 3355.

By voting you could win a share of over \$20,000 worth of prizes plus if you vote for the NESCAFE BIG BREAK winner, you'll go in the draw for \$5,000!



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Since 1990

Competition closes 12/11/04.

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HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2 (WILL INCLUDE ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: EVOLUTION STUDIOS

WEBSITE: WWW.EVOS.NET

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

WRC 4 is, funny enough, the fourth instalment of this official rally franchise. By all rights, it should be four times as good!



REPLAY VALUE

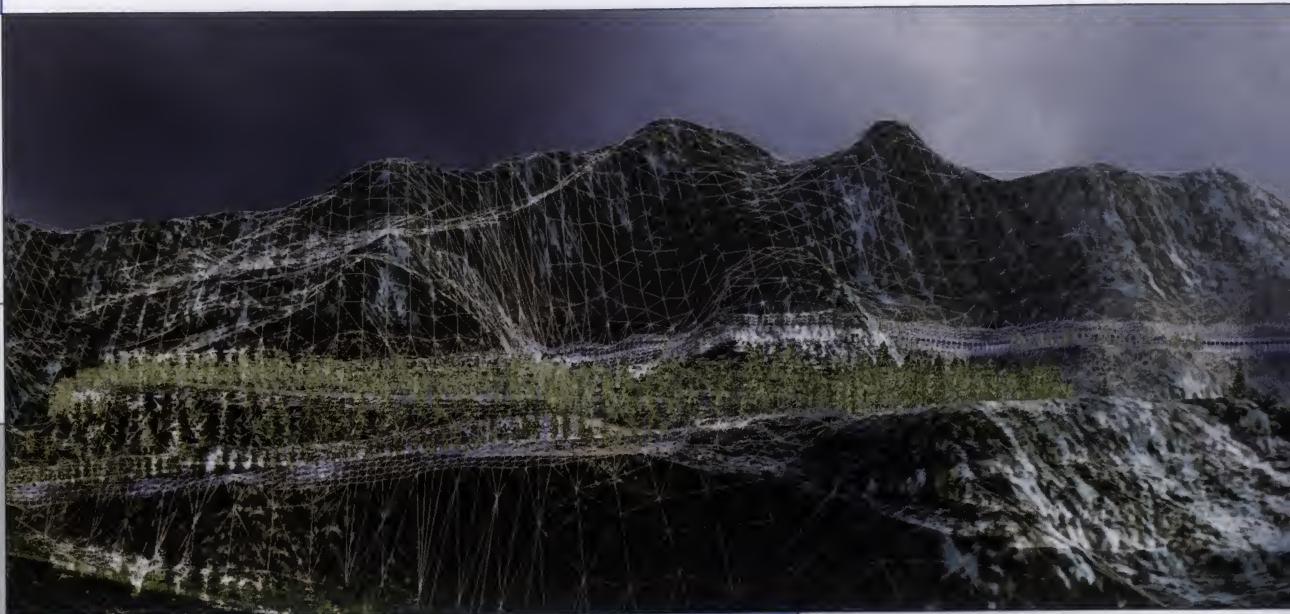


Rub some dirt into your mate's rallying wounds and show him your superior racing skills again, again and again.

One of the highlights of the *WRC* series has always been the almost photo-realistic TV-style replays. What better way to celebrate a well-earned stage record than to sit back and relive every handbrake turn and powerslide? Things will be no different this time around and there have been plenty of improvements.

Far better lighting and a soft filter effect really give the visuals a boost and there are occasions where you'll swear you are watching actual footage. The revamped environmental effects are equally gratifying and the water splashes are fantastic, especially the ones in Argentina. To use the obligatory bad pun, *WRC 3* should be choking on its sequel's dust very soon.

X RACING



Environments still look amazing – and they're now destructible



WRC 4

Fast cars, bad weather and drivers' names you can't pronounce

What has 300 bhp, a top speed of over 220km/h and can go from zero to 160km/h in about five seconds? On gravel? Anybody who guessed a *WRC* rally car gets a smiley face stamp on their forehead. Those who wouldn't know a rallying beast from your mother-in-law's Festiva turn the page immediately – and don't come back!

If the deadpan realism of the flendishly difficult *Richard Burns Rally* didn't make you hurl your joypad under a bus and slash your wrists, *WRC 4* will be awaiting you soon. Not content with a mere update of its last game, Evolution Studios looks like it's gone up a proverbial gear or two and is aiming to deliver a game that's leaner, meaner and dirtier than a sordid night with Natalie Portman.

At first glance we couldn't notice too many changes, but they became apparent as soon as we strapped ourselves into the 2004 Impreza. The sometimes bland environments of *WRC 3* are gone and the tracks look far more authentic with every bump, rut and puddle convincingly realised. The trackside pop-up is far less common and the already huge draw distance practically reaches the horizon. Panoramic vistas are what we've come to expect from the series but this is the most

picturesque scenery we've seen so far.

Anyone who's been "behind the wheel" of *WRC 3* will be familiar with the handling, although braking feels more realistic now. As usual, a mixture of delicate steering, timed acceleration and efficient braking will be required to get you to the top of the podium.

WRC 4 will cover the official 2004 World Rally Championship so rally pundits can expect an accurate roster of cars, tracks and drivers. It looks like New Zealand, Germany and Finland have been ditched in favour of Mexico and Japan. The Peugeot 206 has been replaced by the slightly less striking 307 and Mitsubishi have returned fresh from a year's absence with their new Lance – a menacing proposition to say the least. The Hyundai Accent is MIA but few will mourn its passing.

In addition to the WRC class there'll also be Group N and Super 1600 class, less powerful production models with their own nuances and attributes. The Extreme cars will also make a return. For the uninitiated, Extreme vehicles are fantasy cars from the major manufacturers that go above and beyond the allowed criteria for an acceptable WRC entry. These snarling beauties are the kind of two-man ballistic missile that would make even the most hardcore rally spectator stay off the track, lest

he become a fleshy speedbump.

The championship mode will be expanded to more accurately mirror the real WRC format with proper four day events, including a shakedown on day one. With close to 2,000 kms of track in the game, the quest for WRC glory should be a far more serious exercise than before. That means you should be focused on the stages ahead, not inviting any Swedish twins back to the garage for a hot tub to show them your crankshaft.

WRC 4 will again support two-player head-to-head but this time online play will also be a feature. You'll be able to race against eight other players, or up to 30 players in tournaments.

While an improvement on its predecessor, the damage modeling doesn't look like it's in the same league as *Colin McRae Rally 2005*. Another gripe is that while the destructible environments are nice, there needs to be more distinction between what fences you can turn into a shower of splinters and what fences will bring your high speed joyride to a sudden stop.

We're looking forward to pitting the final product against *Colin McRae Rally 2005*, and we'll let you know whether it has the engine power to nudge Colin off his muddy throne. 



PAUL'S ADVENTURE BUSINESS STARTED OFF SMALL



THEN HE STARTED TRACKAIR AND TOOK CONTROL



WILL PAUL BE A BIG FISH IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?



ON A WING AND A PRAYER

Ever wonder just what all those bizarrely placed scoops, fins and spoilers are really for on a rally car? Surely not all of them are keeping the thing on the ground – some of them must be for decoration? Wrong!

On a twisty stage, a rally car can spend around 50% of the time sideways, and their aerodynamics are designed with that in mind to keep the car stable. And the shopping trolley spoilers aren't there to stop them taking off either – they're there to keep the car straight as it sails through the air at over 200km/h. That said, we can't help but imagine a bunch of rally tech-heads deciding which one looks the coolest on their brand new toy.



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HANDS-ON

players: 1-4 (2-6 ONLINE)

DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT

DEVELOPER: INEVITABLE ENTERTAINMENT

WEBSITE: WWW.MIDWAY.COM

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: 2005

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

50%

AREA 51's gorgeous visuals and inventive weaponry have helped get it pencilled-in at the very top of our FPS to-play list.

AREA51

STUDIO 51?



Although for the most part Area 51 is a gritty sci-fi thriller, it also pokes fun at a lot of the conspiracy theories perpetuated throughout North American culture – and popularised through TV shows like *The X-Files*. At one point during our hands-on we stumbled upon a studio in the basement of Area 51 completely set up to look like the moon, with a cardboard cut-out of Neil Armstrong and a Lunar Lander, and even a distant Earth that we shot – causing it to swing around like a framed picture on a wall! We were also surprised to find an autopsy being conducted, *a la* the Roswell conspiracy... only in this case it was the aliens who were cutting open a human! Hurrah!

X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

AREA 51

Humans versus Alien-affected mutants? No, it's not another Federal Election...

There's much debate over what exactly goes on in Area 51, a secret US military station located in the desert just north of Las Vegas. The US government claims that it's just an innocent testing facility for prototype aircraft, while conspiracy theorists and *X-Files* fans alike maintain that it's full of UFOs and little green men hard at work constructing the next model iPod. That thing can't be of this earth!

But one thing's for certain about Area 51 – it's the title of a new first-person shooter from Midway. Or is it? Yes, it is. And we know for certain because we've played it. Or have we? Yes, we have.

After a distress signal from Area 51 is received by the US Army, a small Special Forces unit is sent in to investigate an apparent viral outbreak. Players play the role of specialist Ethan Cole of the HAZMAT Division, and must delve deep into the top secret compound in an effort to solve the enigma that is Area 51, preventing the viral mutagen from being released and irrevocably mutating all life on Earth!

So what sets Area 51 apart from all the other cookie-cutter shooters on the PS2? That's exactly the question we put to the producer of the game. Trouble is we didn't

really get an answer, and the next thing we remember is waking up naked in a garbage bin in an alley in Kings Cross. Boy, they really don't like questions, do they?

Fortunately we spent enough time with the game to realise that although all of the hype's on *Killzone*, Area 51 just might be the FPS experience that PS2 owners have been waiting for. The game is initially squad-based – you go in with several other members of the Special Forces by your side – but without giving away too much, you won't be with friends for long...

Area 51 takes place almost exclusively indoors, with quite remarkable lighting throughout the otherwise dark, foreboding environments, which are packed with all kinds of nasty alien creatures thanks to the awesome talents of Stan Winston Studios, the monster creators behind the *Jurassic Park*, *Alliens* and *Predator* movies, among others. But you won't just be fighting with the aliens around you...

But also the alien within you! Thanks to the viral mutagen that has spread throughout the compound and subsequently into his body, Cole will slowly evolve and acquire new powers as the game progresses. While you'll start off with good old-fashioned shotguns and assault

rifles, you'll soon move on to sophisticated alien weaponry including guns that fire flesh-seeking parasites and other jellyfish-like projectiles. Eventually you'll be able to command the virus itself, enabling you to launch explosive clouds of mini-viruses from your fingertips and organisms that feed energy off your enemies and attribute it back to you.

Area 51 is also boasting a very robust multiplayer component, supporting a four-player split-screen mode for multitap owners and online play for up to 16 players. Modes confirmed so far range from "Deathmatch" to "Capture the Flag" to "Humans versus Alien Mutants", and we can only hope that some kind of co-operative mode finds its way into the finished product too.

If you're paranoid about the paranormal or you just enjoy blasting several shades of green goo out of extra-terrestrial combatants, Area 51 could very well abduct many hours of your puny human lifespan when it arrives in 2005 – we're hoping for a release early in the year but, unsurprisingly, the exact release date is still under wraps. But with graphics, gameplay and a storyline this good, it's unlikely that anyone will want to keep the contents of this particular Area 51 a secret. **TO**



The Olsen twins hit the dancefloor...



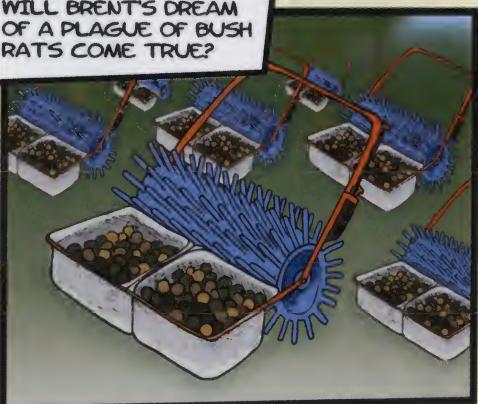
BRENT HAD TO HARVEST 1000 MACADAMIA TREES BY HAND



THERE HAD TO BE AN EASIER WAY SO HE INVENTED THE BUSH RAT



WILL BRENT'S DREAM OF A PLAGUE OF BUSH RATS COME TRUE?



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VOTE & YOU COULD WIN!**

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VOCAL CHORD SCRAPINGS

Of course, what would a game about the US Military's most infamous facility be without the monotone vocals of David Duchovny? You're in luck – the master of deadpan acting provides the voice for the protagonist Ethan Cole in *Area 51*. And who would you choose to play a twisted creature fuelled by a hatred for mankind? Well apparently your ex-girlfriend was busy, so the next best thing was Marilyn Manson, who will voice the charismatic 'grey' alien, Edgar. And Powers Boothe will provide the voice of Major Bridges. We're not sure who Powers Boothe is either, but we're sure he gets plenty of chicks with a name like that.



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-6

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: YUKE'S MEDIA CREATIONS

WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2#32

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

65%

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW
will be the bomb diggity.
Start working off the ring
rust with HCTP now to
ensure you're in top form!

Put your hand up if
you're feeling coldJust relax, this won't
hurt one little bitIf you work out 24 hours a day,
you too will have abs of steel

X WRESTLING

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW

THQ continues layin' da smack down wid its latest grappler

It's been almost a year since we stepped into the squared circle with the last licensed WWE grappler, and while there have been many contenders for the PS2 Wrestling Game Championship Belt, no one can deny that the *SmackDown!* series has held onto the crown and fought off all challengers. Well, just like a young Randy Orton to the veteran Triple H, *WWE SmackDown! Vs RAW* looks to surpass its predecessor, and even land a powerful RKO during the process.

Somehow, Yuke's has managed to squeeze even more horsepower out of the PS2 – upping the polygon count of the superstars by a whopping 25 per cent. If you thought the superstars from *Here Comes The Pain* looked lifelike, you'll think you have ringside seats at Wrestlemania when you fire up *SmackDown! Vs RAW*. The superstars are uncanny likenesses of their real world counterparts, and the WWE Divas look less like someone pulled them out of the display window of Myer and more like the hot[ish] chicks they should.

SmackDown! Vs RAW features a choice of commentary, so you can pick either the veteran calls of RAW's Jim Ross and Jerry "The King" Lawler, or the belligerent bickering of *SmackDown!*'s Michael Cole and Tazz. Commentary is situationally dependant, as before,

but usually involves a bit of back-and-forth banter between the play-by-play and colour calls. This keeps matches flowing even when the action lulls to mat work and makes it feel all the more like a broadcast event. Crowd chants are more diverse too – after disrobing Narayan in a hard-fought Bra and Panties match, chants of "HLAI HLAI!" (ask any WWE fan) kicked up from the surrounding masses. We later repeated the feat in the game, and were delighted with an identical response.

The create-a-wrestler mode is back, better than ever, but you probably won't need to use it, as you've got around 50 WWE superstars from the current roster, as well as past legends including the hardcore Mick Foley, current Hollywood star The Rock, and some old school favourites like "Superfly" Jimmy Snuka and infamous man-mountain Andre the Giant. You can even create your own belt and contest it with your mates for the ultimate grudge match.

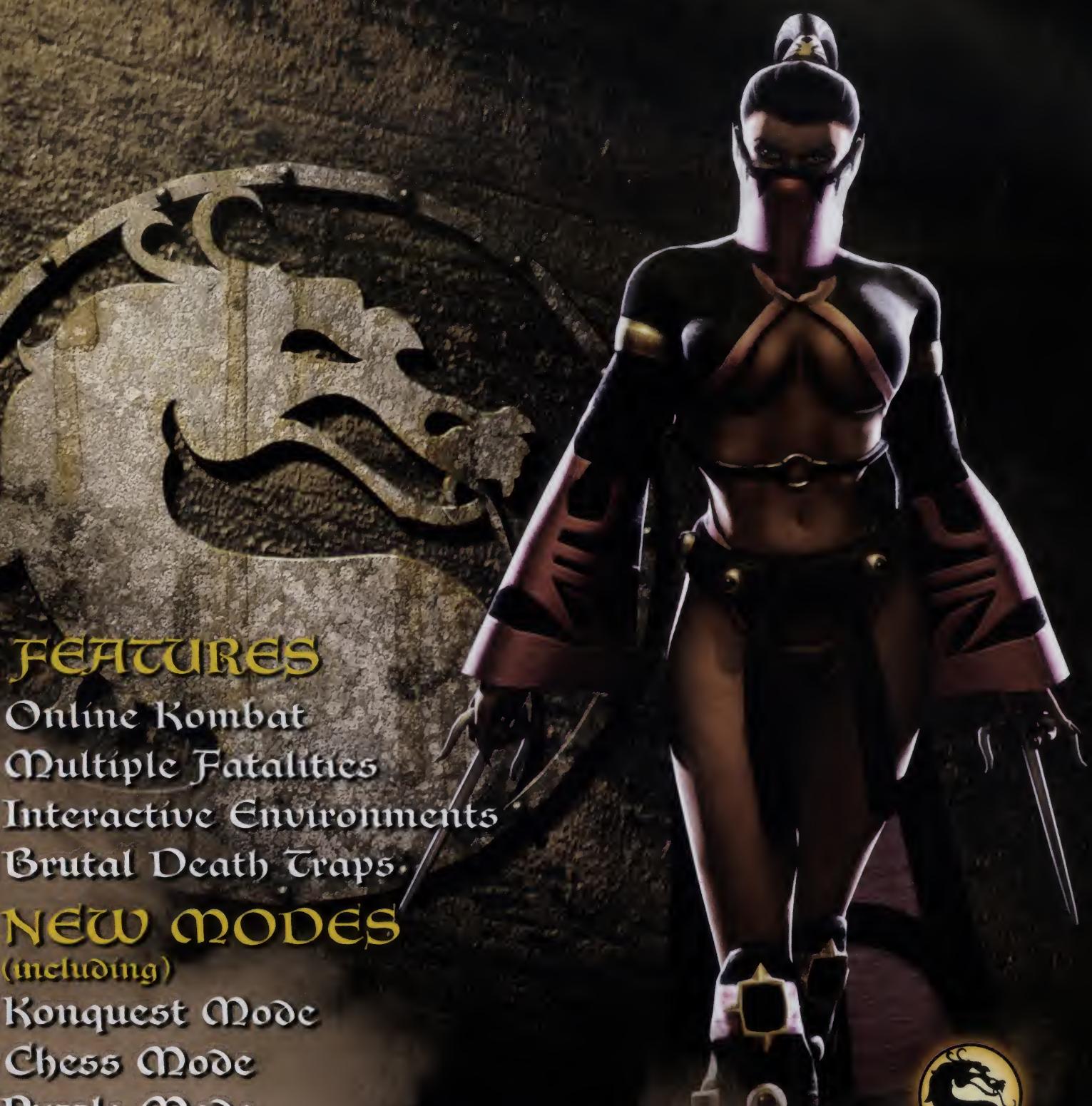
If you're not already doing the Spinaroni at all these features, the Career mode now features branching storylines penned by WWE writers, plus *SmackDown! Vs RAW* will feature... online play! So keep saying your prayers and taking your vitamins, because *SmackDown! Vs RAW*'s gonna run wild, brother. Soon! **NO**

ANATOMY LESSONS

One of the cooler new features in the game is the ability to choose whether your superstar is a face (good guy) or a heel (bad guy). Once you've picked your persona, you get special bonuses for playing in character. Play to the crowd, take risks and use your signature moves, and faces are given temporary invincibility and added strength for a limited time – for example, you'll see this when Hulk Hogan "hulks up". Bad guys can maintain illegal holds and other dodgy things like using the ropes during a pin. They'll also get away with totally dastardly things like quick low blows that somehow go unnoticed by the ref. No, really Sir – I didn't do a thing. Honest!



BE KONSUMED



FEATURES

- Online Kombat
- Multiple Fatalities
- Interactive Environments
- Brutal Death Traps.

NEW MODES

(including)

- Konquest Mode
- Chess Mode
- Puzzle Mode



Mileena

KOMING SOON



PlayStation.2



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 MIDWAY



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-16

DISTRIBUTOR: EIDOS

DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

WEBSITE: WWW.EIDOS.COM

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

85%

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND
Is already shaping up to be a smart and inventive variation on the futuristic first-person shooter.

SNOWBLIND



X FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

It's like someone dropped Deus Ex in the middle of a warzone

As an elite, bio-enhanced operative trying to prevent Chinese civil war from breaking out in some hazy futuristic setting, you'd probably be tempted to find the lousy scriptwriter and use your bio-abilities to strangle him. But persevere and you'll find what could be one of 2004's coolest shooters.

Project: *Snowblind*'s greatest claim to fame is artificially intelligent soldiers who actually support you in a useful way. We've seen plenty of shooters before that have had friendly AI soldiers running around in the background, firing their guns every so often – but we knew they were only there to look good. It didn't matter if they kept on shooting or if they took one too many bullets. The mission experience would always play out in exactly the same way. Your buddies in *Snowblind* actually target real enemies, shoot them down and drastically alter the course of your team's success. If you hang back and fail to support your buddies, they'll be killed off and you'll notice immediately how much tougher it is to progress through the levels. Keeping your men alive is the best strategy for winning this war.

Don't start turning the page yet though. *Snowblind* won't bog down into complicated squad-command

gameplay. You have the ability to heal wounded men but you never need to bother giving them co-ordinates to advance to, or orders to carry out. Your men are smart enough to fight the enemy without your help. If there's a gun turret they'll use it, if there's an enemy hiding behind cover they'll circle around and if there's a group of enemies stupid enough to stand together they'll toss a grenade into the mix.

Adding to the fun, everything's upgradeable in Project: *Snowblind*. Shotgun not packing enough punch? No problem. Just collect an upgrade for the weapon and you'll be bringing both barrels to the party. Your character can also take advantage of a variety of bio-tech upgrades to make him fight harder, stronger and faster. The best bio-ability we saw was a slight re-working of the old Bullet Time caper. With the right enhancements you can slow time down so much that it's possible to pull off crazy stunts like catching grenades mid-air and tossing them back to the enemy.

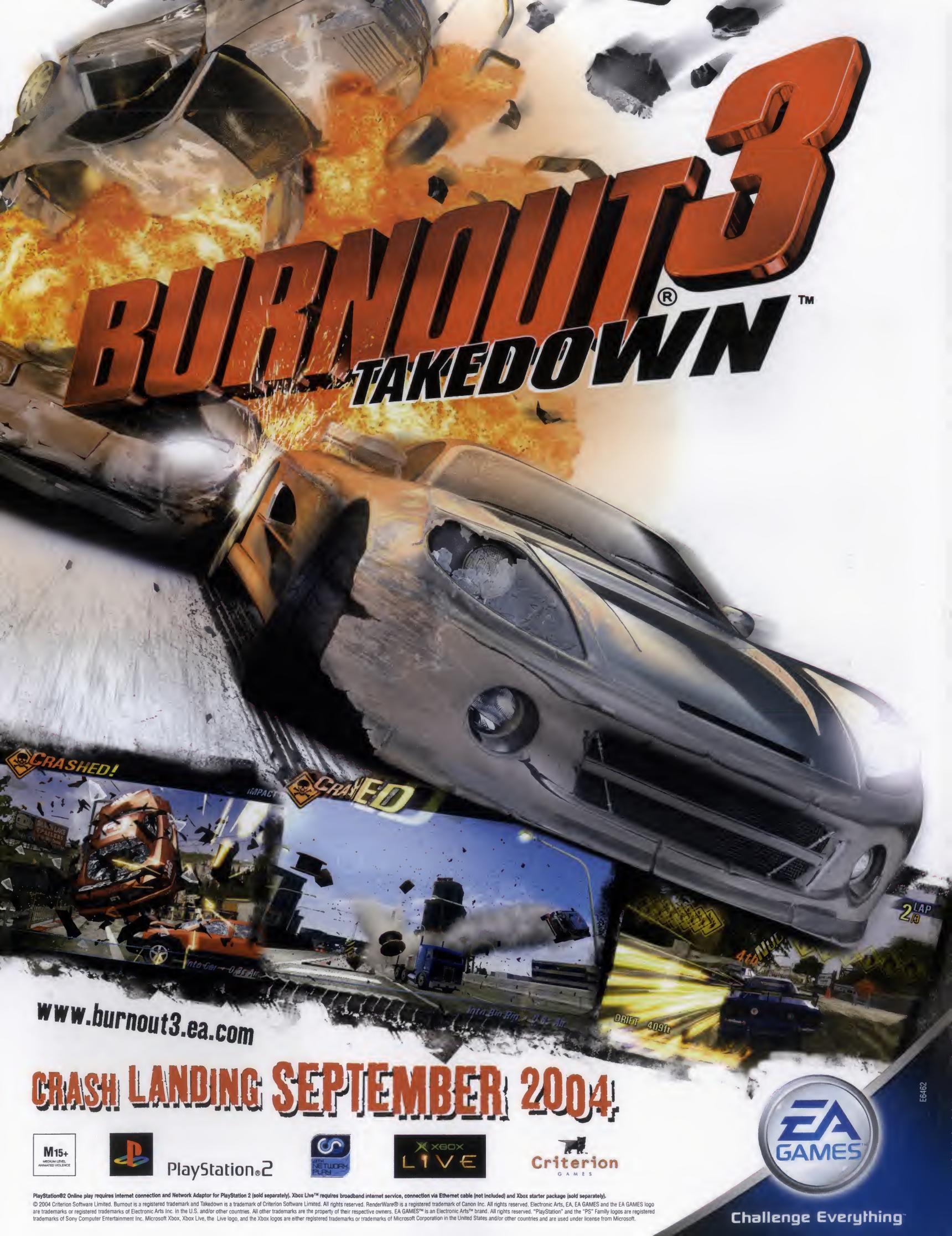
With *Killzone* also aiming its crosshairs on our holiday cash the futuristic FPS genre may not be big enough for the both of them, but there's no denying *Snowblind* is a quality product. The war is coming. **NP**

DAY OF SEX

That day with Bambi, Sandi and Mandi was just awesome. They were the hottest girls ever. And so randy. All they wanted to do was... (What the hell are you talking about? I asked you to write a boxout on "Deus Ex"! – Ed) Oh... right. Yeah... *Deus Ex* was pretty awesome too. It's actually pretty similar to Project: *Snowblind*. It was all about this dark future with black market bio-mods that could be used to enhance your characters skills, like Infra-red vision and stuff. Bambi had a pair of bio-implants too. Hers didn't have any special abilities but boy did they look fantastic in a tight T-shirt. Good times.



BURNOUTTM TAKE DOWNTM



www.burnout3.ea.com

CRASH LANDING SEPTEMBER 2004



PlayStation 2



PlayStation®2 Online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately). Xbox Live™ requires broadband Internet service, connection via Ethernet cable (not included) and Xbox starter package (sold separately). © 2004 Criterion Software Limited. Burnout is a registered trademark and Takedown is a trademark of Criterion Software Limited. All rights reserved. RenderWare® is a registered trademark of Canon Inc. All rights reserved. Electronic Arts, EA, EA GAMES and the EA GAMES logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. EA GAMES™ is an Electronic Arts™ brand. All rights reserved. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft Xbox, Xbox Live, the Live logo, and the Xbox logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft.

Challenge Everything™

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-2

DISTRIBUTOR: ELECTRONIC ARTS

DEVELOPER: EA GAMES

WEBSITE: WWW.EAGAMES.COM

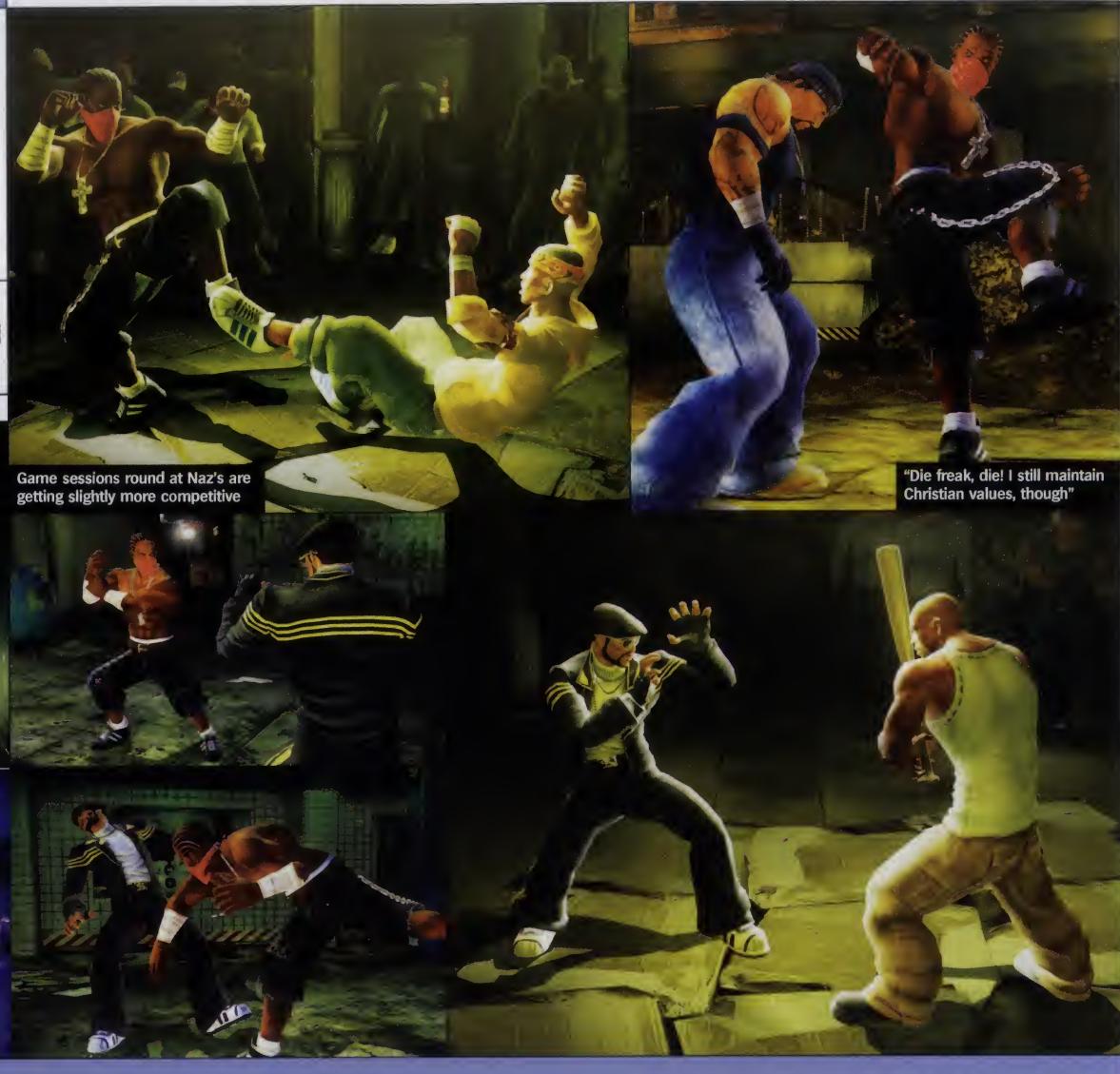
LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY
looks to take the series into the underbelly of illegal fighting. This will be more than your average sequel!

X FIGHTING



X FIGHTING

DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NEW YORK

This puts east coast and west coast rivalries to shame!

Def Jam: Vendetta was a sleeper hit last year. Its developer, Aki, had previously had a considerable absence from the Western market, but noting its track record for producing quality wrestling games, EA signed it to the EA BIG label, and the result was a memorable underground fighter/wrestler with a hip-hop feel. Now comes the sequel, *Def Jam: Fight For New York*.

The story picks up right at the end of the first game, while the defeated gangland boss D-Mob is being hauled off to the hoosegow by detectives. While en route, the police vehicle is involved in a heavy 'accident', and the unknown assailant hauls a battered D-Mob from the wreckage and sneaks him away to a hideout. With the crime boss down, but not out, this leaves an opportunity for rival gangs to ascend to power. And so the fight for New York has begun...

Each character can now choose between five different fighting styles including Thai kickboxing, eastern martial arts, submission-based shoot fighting, street fighting and wrestling. The controls have changed notably to adopt the new styles, and the battle lines are redrawn. These aren't wrestling matches anymore, so pin falls don't count for squat. Fights continue until one

competitor is beaten into a bloody pulp and carried out on a stretcher. There are no rounds, no referees and no disqualifications – this is no-holds-barred fighting.

Matches no longer take place on the canvas in a ring – it's far less civilised than that. Your ring is a seething mass of bloodthirsty gang-bangers, eager to see whether the bets they've placed on the fight will go their way. Unlike the previous game's crowds which did little but wave and cheer, getting shoved into these thugs will leave you hurting. You'll either be shoved forcibly back into the fight or even held in place, giving your opponent a few free shots on you. They even offer weapons for you to take, such as iron bars and baseball bats for extra pain, and if they don't like you, you can cop an unexpected glassing in the back of the head.

With a host of Def Jam recording artists battling it out including everyone from Snoop Dogg to Henry Rollins, a bevy of delectable babes like buxom bombshell Carmen Electra and a pumping hip-hop soundtrack, *Def Jam: Fight for New York* just can't come soon enough. The line-up of stars is one of its greatest strengths and far outweighs the one in *Vendetta*. We'll be getting down and dirty with it before too much longer to give you the 411, dawg. **NO**

WHERE MAH DAWGZ AT?

The Story Mode introduces the new create-a-fighter mode (which was sorely missing from the prequel) in a particularly awesome way. After the road accident, the busted-up cops are filling a report down at the station, and the duty officer asks them to describe the suspect. That's the player's cue to customise their character's physical appearance and voice. If you're not feeling uber-creative, you can simply pick one of several generated identikit to get into the action straight away. As the game progresses, you select your fighting style and even mosey on down to the shopping district and spend your hard-earned cash on new outfits. You can even customise your fighter with a selection of tats and a full range of bling from the famous Jacob the Jeweller for extra street cred.





Grab a Fanta.
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THE BIGGEST GAME EVER CREATED IS ALMOST UPON US...

WORDS: RICHIE YOUNG



Since *San Andreas* was first revealed to a select group of press at E3 2004 back in May, *OPS2* has been all over the game – uncovering everything there is to know about the *San Andreas* universe. We've had it all covered, from CJ – the new lead character – to the vehicles, cities, new abilities, technical improvements and the plethora of mini-games. All that, and we've been the first to show you over the past months masses of new screenshots so that you can come to a few conclusions of your own.

Now, we're just one month away, with the game set to hit our shores on 12 November 2004. Next month's issue of *OPS2* (December 2004) will carry the country's very first review of *GTA: San Andreas* and we assure you there's loads still under wraps. We're counting down the days to when we will play the game to completion and give you the final verdict on how well Rockstar has managed to pull this massive project together. We know you're hungry for every scrap of information though, and also how long a month feels when you just happen to be waiting around for what is touted as the game of the decade. So, we've had *OPS2* spies uncovering even more top secret info about the game. Hot off the press then, here are brand-new details and final round-up before we get the finished version of *GTA: San Andreas*...





GANT BRIDGE

The look and vibe of *San Andreas* varies wildly from city to city. Rockstar North has worked hard to capture the spirit of San Francisco in the design of San Fierro. Here CJ pilots his dinghy underneath the Gant Bridge.



THE WEAPONS

Expect some classic weapons to make a reappearance in *San Andreas*. While you will be able to find and buy katana swords, golf clubs and the like, it is the new range of weapons and CJ's improved ability to 'lock' onto enemies when fighting that will be the big addition.

CJ can now lock on to an opponent while holding a melee weapon. This means you'll be able to walk around while being locked on to an enemy and constantly facing them, giving you the ability to choose the best time to attack. During hand-to-hand battles, blocking is now possible and these moves will vary depending on what weapon CJ is wielding at the time.

As for targeting, once you've held down **□**, options will open up for targeting. CJ will target the closest hostile enemy, but failing that, he'll target the closest enemy in front of him within range. If there isn't a target, CJ will be able to "free aim". The camera will settle behind CJ and a reticle will appear. The left analogue stick will move CJ and allow him to strafe, while the right analogue will control the camera. As part of the strafing

ability, it will even be possible for CJ to be firing at enemies while moving backward! Depending on the weapon, CJ will feature a different stance, and this stance will improve alongside CJ's firearms experience.

Headshots are performed automatically when CJ is within range. If you get too close, CJ will then resort to a hand-to-hand attack. Obviously, guns make serious noise, and you need to be prepared to deal with other enemies within earshot. All things considered, CJ will control more like a traditional third-person shooter character, and the targeting system has been vastly improved over the one seen in *Vice City*.

Staying true to the rest of the *Grand Theft Auto* philosophy, Rockstar has aimed to give gamers the most options possible – and this applies to the weapon mechanics as well. Just as in *Vice City*, it is still possible to use **□** and **△** to rapidly cycle through targets, so for players used to the original shooting system – you needn't be concerned!

As we've previously revealed in *OPS2*, CJ's skill will improve in most aspects of the game as you play. Just as Tommy could run for longer in *Vice City* through

increased fitness (gained by running regularly), CJ will be able to shoot better with experience.

With more shooting, CJ will be able to reload more quickly – crucial in the heat of battle. His fire rate will also increase – meaning that effectively, he'll be able to take down larger groups of enemies better as the game progresses. In a first, *San Andreas* will also introduce two-weapon blasting. This means that with two weapons, CJ's reloads will be less frequent and he'll be able to take out more enemies with twice the amount of bullets. Accuracy too, has been included. After CJ has blasted away, the circle outside the reticle will expand to reflect CJ's improved abilities and to further even that, crouching down will add more stability to the shot.

This month, we are able to reveal two new weapons in *San Andreas* – both of them will be found in the San Andreas countryside. A shovel has been included, but it is the Desert Eagle that will pack more punch. This is a massive, lethal handgun – and could be accurately described as a hand-cannon. The weapon is far more potent than a Magnum, and you can expect CJ to struggle just to use it when he first comes across one...

THE GAMEPLAY

If you haven't already gathered, Rockstar is making a genuine effort to up the ante when it comes to interactivity. We now all know about the eating, swimming, mini-games and exercising but the environment itself will throw up some challenges of its own. *San Andreas* will feature fires – and we mean serious Californian summer-type fires. They may be started accidentally (through wayward Molotov cocktails or car explosions), but CJ will also be able to use them to his advantage and start fires intentionally. What's even more surprising is that CJ will be able to extinguish them as well!

Nothing's safe either. It's not just buildings that will go up in smoke – the countryside and entire sections of forest will be at risk, and when the San Andreas Fire Department doesn't show up CJ will be called into action. CJ will have to do this as both a good deed (by saving people) and for his own safety.

Regular fires will also be found burning in fast food outlets like the Burger Shot or Cluckin Bell, and after picking up an extinguisher, CJ will have to aim for the bottom of the flame before pulling the trigger to put them out.

Remember the time-cycles in *GTA III* and *Vice City*? Well Rockstar has now added moon phases to add to the game's realism! The game will keep track of how many days you've spent in San Andreas, knowing which day of the week it is and calculating the moon phases over a 30-day cycle. When spending time in the countryside, the clear skies and bright moons are more evident than in the city areas.



SAN ANDREAS FACTS

SILENT KILLS:

Any time an enemy isn't aware of CJ's presence, CJ can utilise a stealth method of attack. This is done much in the same way as seen in *Manhunt* – and we were witness to a prime example of this when CJ pulled off the move successfully on a cargo ship docked in San Fierro's bay.

NEW DIALOGUE SYSTEM:

Details on this are somewhat limited but we do know that from time to time some San Andreas residents will want to chat with you. By controlling CJ with the d-pad, you will be able to choose how he responds in the game's conversations.

CLIMBING:

CJ can now climb onto and over objects. In San Fierro, this comes in handy when you find yourself on a container ship rescuing some refugee hostages for triad boss 'Wu Zi Mu' in 'The Da Nang Thang' mission.

INSIDE THE COBRA DOJO

CJ squares off inside the Cobra Martial Arts dojo, one of many places across San Andreas where you'll be able to work on your fighting technique. In this dojo, CJ learns moves like roundhouse and running kicks. There will be a few distinct fighting styles in the game, with a number of moves each. Every time you learn a new move, you can mix and match them with the moves you know to create your own unique fighting style. In an update to the combat system, @ now blocks and @ and @ are two different attacks. What's more, CJ can now lock onto anyone in the game even when he's not holding a weapon.





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ANIMATED VIOLENCE

THE VEHICLES

We are able to reveal some new vehicles this month. There are many more to be revealed when we play the final version of the game, so expect these new babies to be just the tip of the iceberg!

There are many new airplanes to fly around San Andreas with and considering its size, it's just logical! When onboard, there will be an on-screen altimeter, indicating your height off the ground. The planes are generally faster and more nimble than their predecessors and the crop-duster, in particular, is much more manoeuvrable, making basic stunts like barrel rolls, hammerheads and loops possible.

With so much speculation concerning mini-games like the basketball and pool, it's astounding to consider how much will be in the final game. Since our revelations last issue, we have uncovered downhill mountain biking. If you manage to hike to the top of San Andreas' mountain, Mount Chiliad, you will find a downhill race that you are able to enter. It's imperative that you've built up CJ's bike-riding skills if you plan to take on this

challenge, however, as the extreme speeds, bumps and turns and ruthless opponent tactics are a massive challenge.

The mountain bike differs a lot from the original BMX that you will find in Los Santos as well. Astoundingly, the mountain bike comes equipped with gears (though chosen automatically), so you are able to reach quite high speeds.

The bulldozer has been designed with plenty of power and "go forward" in mind and it will be the first "rear-wheel steering" vehicle in the game. The plough itself is workable, allowing CJ to smash through buildings, flip cars and cause general chaos. The environment itself also features plenty more destructible objects – there are milk crates, fences, plants and furniture to smash up.

Another, albeit slightly more novel, vehicle is the game's ride-on lawnmower. While it may very well prove to be the slowest thing in the game, it will beat having CJ travel on foot considering the vast distances involved in San Andreas. And you just might be able to mulch your enemies up with it too.



WELL SHACKED PIZZA!

Hungry for more GTA juiciness? Rockstar is the supreme master of teasing its fans and has stretched its marketing skill to unprecedented levels with *San Andreas*. To see what else will be cooking up when we finally land ourselves within the *San Andreas* world, check out the following (fully endorsed) *Grand Theft Auto* morsels online!

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THE MUSIC

The audio in the GTA games has always been among its greatest strengths and while there is still little word on the actual radio stations, we are able to confirm a few details on the musical track listing. Rockstar has penned an agreement with Interscope Records, who are renowned for their back catalogue of tracks from the early '90s era.

"Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas takes place in the early 1990s in a fictional west coast setting, so fans of the blockbuster series can expect the soundtrack to cover the full spectrum of music genres and reflect the sound, vibe and feel of the FM radio dial from that time period," explained Terry Donovan, CEO of Rockstar Games. "Through our partnership with Interscope Records, we are confident that the *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* soundtrack will exceed anything that the videogame industry or Hollywood have ever produced in terms of size, scope and depth."

"We are happy to be working with Rockstar Games on the soundtrack to *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*," said Jimmy Iovine, Chairman of Interscope Geffen A&M Records. "I believe that the enormous effort both companies have made in putting the soundtrack together has resulted in something truly special that will be reflected in both the game and the soundtrack albums."

CALLING ALL CARS, I THINK WE GO 'EM!

The cops in San Andreas have more ways of chasing you than in previous GTA games. As well as regular black & white patrol cars like this one, they have extra-manoeuvrable CHIPS-style motorbikes which can whizz around the backstreets at crazy speeds. Plus they've got improved choppers – and some surprises up their sleeves!



THE COUNTRYSIDE

OPS2 spies have also put the squeeze on Rockstar to get some new details regarding the countryside. RU Haul is one business that will appear in the countryside, and the owner will prove to be a friendly ally for CJ. By providing him with work (where CJ will need to drive an 18-wheeler), CJ will be able to pick up some extra cash, and it's here that CJ will learn to put gas-filled tankers to good mischievous use. By utilising them in missions as rolling bombs, the tankers are able to cause massive destruction.

Some GTA fans have also expressed concern to OPS2 over *San Andreas* countryside gameplay and what it will actually consist of. Apart from countryside-specific missions, we are also aware of numerous races that will take place there. As such, and somewhat predictably, races will be primarily off-road, so four-by-four and big-air motocross racing will be the order of the day.



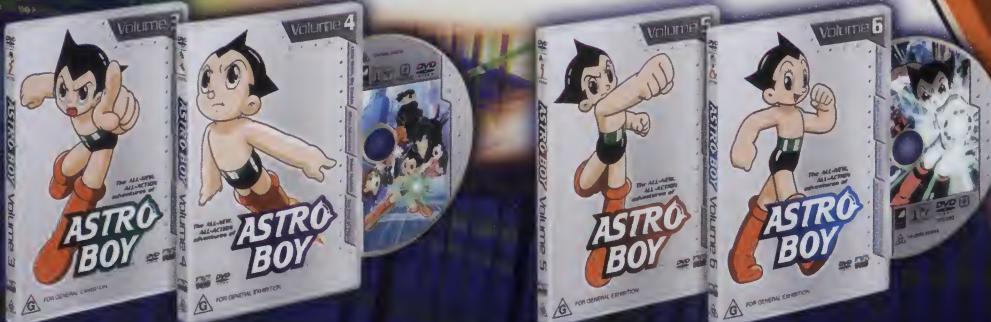
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TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT!

Bend over, matey, and take it like a man!

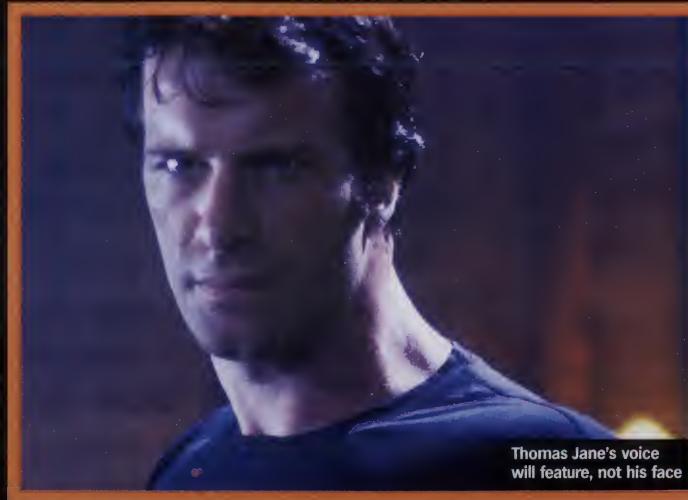
In February of 1974, a new face showed up in issue #129 of *The Amazing Spider-Man*. Rather ambiguously placed – readers couldn't tell whether he was a good guy or a bad guy – Frank Castle, aka The Punisher, was hunting down Spider-Man under the impression that he was a villain, thanks to J. Jonah Jameson's fallacious reports in *The Daily Bugle*. Although he wasn't something entirely new – The Sub-Mariner and The Hangman back in the 1940s were also comic-book heroes who dabbled in darker activities – he was new enough at the time to create quite a stir. With his rugged appearance, macabre logo, bizarre psychoses and utter ruthlessness, not to mention his total lack of any kind of super-power, he caught the attention of comic readers. And kept it.

It wasn't long before his back-story was common knowledge. An ex-Marine, Frank Castle, had mostly given up his life in the military, and was just living quietly with his wife and kiddies. One day, while enjoying a picnic, the family witnessed a mob hit. Well, of course the Mafia had to deal with that little problem, and they massacred the family, leaving only Frank surviving. The rest was, of course, history.

There's something beguiling about the anti-hero, and hell, The Punisher's just a beguiling kinda guy. He's got that persistent, dry-humour monologue, that hate-on for mobsters and terrorists, that slightly unhinged mental state, and a burning urge to do horribly unspeakable things with very big guns. With all the skintight lycra-clad, brightly coloured, fine, upstanding, and almost-identical superheroes running around, it's no surprise that one like The Punisher appealed to the masses. We're none of us perfect – The Punisher speaks to that deep spark within us all that desires to wreak merry slaughter and mayhem.

At the moment, comics are really hot property. There's been a spate of comic book movies, and there's another spate on the way. The box office is running red-hot with fans





Thomas Jane's voice will feature, not his face

SOUND FAMILIAR?

The early version of *The Punisher* that we played still had placeholder voice acting – The Punisher himself had this gravely growl that we found quite amusing, it seems, though, that the final version will feature the voice talent of movie Punisher Thomas Jane – perhaps as a way to make up for the absolutely appalling movie. Now, before you say anything, no, the character of Frank will not be like the character in the movie, and Thomas Jane is not lending his likeness to the production. We're expecting good things, this time. Very, very good things indeed.



racing to check out the latest incarnation of their favourite heroes, and the subsequent movie-based games are popping up almost faster than we can play them. Unfortunately, *The Punisher*, as a movie, was absolutely woeful. The characterisation was shallow, the plot banal and the dialogue on par with a B-grade porno. Fortunately, the game isn't based on the movie at all.

Garth Ennis (writer), Steve Dillon (artist) and Jimmy Palmiotti (inker) worked as a team on the hit DC Vertigo comic *Preacher* for about five years. In that time, we saw cannibalism on live victims, sodomy, exploding flesh, a rottweiler gnawing on a guy's tender bits, a kid with a face like an arse, and the horizontal tango with a pile of meat (yes, the pig-and-cow kind). And that's just the tame stuff. So when the same twisted guys started working on *The Punisher*, we knew we were in for a treat. The resultant rampaging has now formed the basis for

Volition's interactive take on the maniacal mercenary. For this, we offer our profound gratitude to the gods of gaming.

When we think of The Punisher, we think of nihilistic violence, questionable motives for said violence, a guy who's crazier than a coconut, and sweet, sweet, nasty-as-hell revenge. Well, think bigger than that. At least in the comic, you get a bit of story every now and again. There's story in the game, sure – but only insofar as providing a vehicle for the slaughter, and offering you a choice of paths to the end via the direction your actions carry you. This is a game that takes violence, piles it high with butchery, wraps it up in carnage, and ties a big red ribbon of entrails around the whole lot. Over the top? You better believe it. Do we love it? Oh, ho, baby.

This isn't to say that the game is shallow. It's not. While the game is definitely about blood, guts, gore and more blood, there're layers of subtlety here that astute gamers will

pick up on. You won't get any real backstory on the character – Volition felt that the character had enough backstory – but you will get little glimpses of insight into who Frank Castle is, and why he does what he does.

Which, according to Garth Ennis at least, is because he enjoys it. Oh, we all know the reason we've been given – it's vengeance, purging the earth of scum, etc. But what we have here is one seriously psyched-out dude on a murderous rampage, and if this were anyone else killing anyone else, there'd be a lynch mob on his tail. Given that it's The Punisher though, and the people he's killing are worse than he is, it all kinda just falls into place.

Volition Studios is in America's mid-west, in a sleepy little town in Illinois called Champaign. It's almost too pretty and green, and the people say "y'all" and grow corn. It's in this unlikely place that the Volition team is working hard to put together what is quite possibly the most



→ bloodthirsty game that we've ever seen. The irony is not lost on them exactly; but really, they're too tied up in the game to pay much attention.

Their devotion shows. Initially, perhaps, the game looks pretty much like any generic third-person shooter. You haul around a pretty impressive arsenal in the P-Man's pockets, including twin pistols, M16s, a big fat bowie knife, and lovely, lovely frag grenades. You can run around spraying bullets like Jackboot Johnny spraying spittle and fibs, but do that and you're missing out on all the fun.

The game's biggest draw card is the Interrogation Mode, and you can use it on any enemy in the game. Basically, you get *riiiight* up close, and grab the little weasel. This doesn't automatically trigger the mode, and you can either use him as a human shield for a bit, or force the butt of your gun into the back of his head by jiggling the analog sticks for a "regular" questioning. He'll either help you with your mission, or he won't, at which point you can take his head off with one blast from your gun. However, there are also "environmental" interrogations to be performed, and once you've had a play with these babies, you won't want to do it any other way.

The special interrogations work the same way control-wise, but you use a feature of the environment to torture the victim. For example, you can threaten to run your victim through a woodchipper, jiggling the analogue sticks to shove him towards the whirring blades, until you've wrung a confession from him, then tip him up and send him on. You can hold a man's head to an open fire, pushing him down until he coughs up the goods, then hold him in until he dies horribly amidst the flames. You can – literally – put a man's nose to the grindstone until he dishes up the dirt, then delicately sand his face off. You can pin a man beneath a rack of kitchen knives, and gently rattle the rack they hang from over his face until he ponies up the goods, then drop the knives into his head. The controller responds to your victim's fear, with their pulse beating through your hands and ears, speeding up as they get closer and closer to breaking point. All this, of course, done in the most tasteful manner possible, with a nice, slo-mo, *Kill Bill*-style black and white effect at the point of death, while the sound of agonised screaming suddenly cut short intermingled with music plays in the background – "It's a reward for your efforts," says James Tsai, the game's Associate Producer.

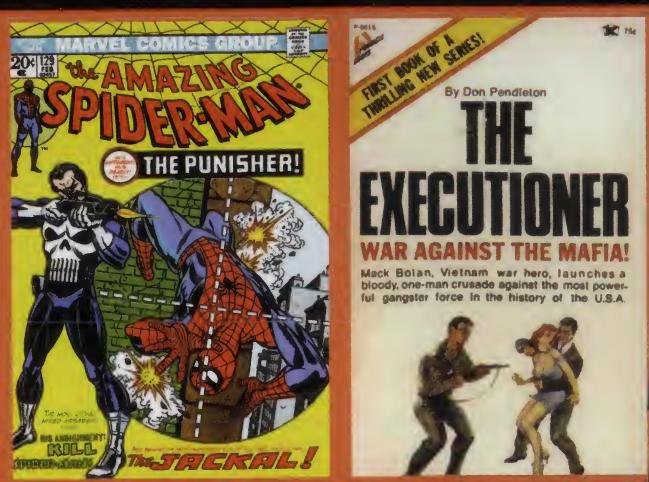
Then, there are the quick kills – by pressing a button, you can stop short in the middle of a gunfight and slice open a guy's throat, or shove a grenade, minus pin, in his mouth (there are about 60 different quick kills so far, and Volition have promised more than 100 before it's finished) – and the special environmental kills (no interrogation required), where you can impale baddies on handily protruding wall features. We decorated an entire room with spitted foes hanging from the walls like an exhibit at the Louvre.

Which naturally begs the question: how do Volition feel



PUNISHMENT EXECUTED!

Although he was new and interesting, The Punisher wasn't really all that original. In 1968, a book by one Don Pendleton debuted, entitled *War Against the Mafia*. The hero of this piece was one Mack Bolan, a Vietnam vet who, after seeing his family massacred by the mob, went on a personal campaign to rid the earth of the Mafia. Calling himself The Executioner, Mack drove around in a state of the art "War Wagon" dispensing justice and death to mobsters everywhere. The Executioner also kept a War Journal, and the story was later adapted as a graphic novel... but not until 1993.



and since they wrote the in-game story, basing it on the "Welcome Back Frank" storyline from the comic, it's bound to sneak through into the game. That's not the only touch of authenticity, either. Volition worked very closely indeed with Marvel to get the production feeling exactly like it should, running all the concept art through the comics giant to get their approval. It didn't stop there. "Marvel were great. They let us come to the movie set and gave us complete access to all their visual stylings, including costumes and set blueprints" (well, the movie and the game *are* based on the same comic story). There are even cameos from all your favourite *Punisher* villains – Kingpin, the Russian, Jigsaw, Nick Fury, Blade Widow, Bullseye, and the villain of the piece, hatchet-faced harridan, Ma Gnucci, whom one would definitely not want to rub the wrong way, and whom Frank undeniably does. He's good that way.

So we've got all these crazy enemies, and all these crazy ways of killing the enemies, and all these enemy flunkies waiting to be mown down where they stand, and really, it doesn't get much better than this. Volition has found a few small ways, though. The first of note is an almost-perfect Havoc physics engine. The environments are highly interactive – you can throw the furniture, shoot down fixtures, throw appliances and tip over heavy items. You can even use parts of your environments as melee weapons – shoot a fan to drop it down on some enemies, or throw a TV set at someone's head. And then the bad dudes go and do nice little rag-doll falls on you, with their limbs flapping about, making the game's combat that much sweeter.

The second is the Punisher-meter. Oh, yes, you get a meter. When you fill this up – obviously, by offing the baddies – you go into Slaughter Mode. It's every bit as cool as it sounds. The screen fades out into greyscale, with only The Punisher and his enemies in colour. The action slows down to bullet time (a concept that is getting slightly overused, but nevertheless works), and you can target several enemies at the same time – meaning, if you have two firearms primed, loaded and in your meaty fists, you can shoot two enemies in different spots simultaneously.

It's unremitting, uncompromising, and quite frankly, unforgettable. There's a new breed of shooter out there, and we're reckoning on *The Punisher* being one of the foremost. It might not be everyone's bag of mixed nuts and cup of bull's blood, but it does what it does very, very well, takes no prisoners, and makes no apologies. We respect that. 



Did you know The Punisher was the inspiration for REM's song "Shiny Happy People"?



WORDS: NARAYAN PATTISON

The clubber's guide to racing

*Rockstar shifts up a gear with *Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition**



**DUB AND DUBBER**

The easiest way to understand "DUB" culture is to think of it as "bling-bling" for your car – the fatter the rims and the golder the trims, the more DUB your pimped-out ride will be. And don't go thinking that putting a turbo in your mum's Honda Civic counts as DUB – it's all about tweaking luxury cars to the limit. To ensure that *Midnight Club 3* is as true as possible to the DUB culture, Rockstar has enlisted *DUB* magazine as creative consultant on the game. If any elements of the gameplay aren't gelling with the street scene then *DUB* magazine can bring them up to speed. Bring it on, plump daddies.



Rockstar's goal from the beginning with the *Midnight Club* series has been to set itself apart from all the other track-based racing games that blur into each other. By doing away with the traditional restrictions of the genre, Rockstar was able to create an open-ended street racer that gave you much more freedom than any other racing game at the time. *Midnight Club II* pushed the series even harder, exploring more of the illegal street racing vibe and taking some tentative steps into the tuning culture that has become all the rage in racing games.

While *Need for Speed Underground 2* and *Juliced* are focusing on the regular tuning culture, Rockstar is determined to stay ahead of the curve by focusing on the latest trend that's sweeping through the automotive industry in the States and across the world. This new trend is all about taking luxury cars rather than sports cars and pimping them out to ridiculous levels. We're only just beginning to get a taste of this scene in Australia with the recent emergence of national show tours like "Pimp My Ride" beginning to take off.

America's *DUB* magazine was established in 2000 and it's been following the high-end tuning culture ever since, even becoming an integral part of the scene itself. *DUB* magazine began by chronicling what was happening with celebrities and hip hop stars, who were buying high-end luxury cars like Cadillacs, Hummers and Escalades, then spending up to \$150,000 upgrading and customising their rides. When preliminary development began on *Midnight Club 3*, Rockstar decided to work with *DUB* on the project to help it accurately represent this high-end tuning culture.

In a bid to remedy another failing of the street car genre, *Midnight Club 3* offers a wide variety of cars to race with. Where other games tend to focus exclusively on cars like Hondas and Mitsubishi Lancers, *Midnight Club 3* offers a huge range including motorcycles, SUVs, pick-ups and American muscle cars on top of the usual range of sports cars. *DUB* magazine was also involved in

the car selection to ensure that the game has all the right vehicles and all the right customisations for them. As well as *DUB*'s seal of approval, Rockstar has also managed to secure official licences for all of the luxury car models featured in the game.

GET YOUR PIMP ON

After taking one look at the staggering range of modifications on offer, it's clear that Rockstar has had just as much fun pimping out its cars in the game as any of the most blinged-out rap stars have.

A car's paint job is one of the easiest and most noticeable modifications you can make. First off you get to choose whether you want the finish to be metallic, gloss, enamel or pearlescent. After this you can use a Photoshop-style colour wheel to choose from an unlimited range of colours to select your base and highlight colour options. By adding up to six different highlight colours you can give a really unique flavour to your ride. As street lights hit the cars the highlights reflect in different shades of colour.

Eye-catching vinyls are another way to give your ride more bling than you'll know what to do with. Flame vinyls are especially popular on classic American muscle cars like the '64 Chevrolet Impala or the '69 Dodge Charger. A growing number of enthusiasts are taking classic cars like these and bringing them into today's customisation age with flash vinyls and new paintjobs.

In addition to vinyls you can also add decals to show off the particular brand of tyres, rims or nitrous that you respect. People tend to be very proud of these brands and want to display them. The *DUB* brand is also a popular decal. These licenced decals can be placed in an almost limitless number of combinations for each car.

Wheels are also huge part of the tuning culture. People spend a huge amount of time deciding which style of rim, from which company, the size of the rim, what tyre company and changing the profile of the tyre so that there's hardly any wheel visible. And as you'd





When the OPS2 team goes pimpin, we go pimpin in style

another way to unleash very useful mini turbo boosts.

Like any good street racer, *Midnight Club 3* complicates your dream run down the road by scattering plenty of traffic in your path. Because of the number of cars you need to dodge and the insane speeds you'll be going at, MC3 throws a new move into the mix – the ability to swing the car up onto two wheels for a brief period so you can squeeze through tight spots.

The game has managed to recreate three important street racing cities on an immense scale. The cities on offer include San Diego (the world capital of illegal street racing), Atlanta (where people bling their cars out more than any other) and Detroit (the home of automobiles – where it all began). The three cities in MC3 may be the same size as the last game, but there will be close to twice as much ground you can drive around on thanks to all the new short-cuts (including on top of buildings).

What really sets *Midnight Club*'s racing experience apart from the rest is the way that winning a race is due just as much to your off-road tactics as your on-road ones. On each city block you pass there will be a

expect, all of these modifications and more are catered for in *Midnight Club 3*.

Before your plumped-out ride is ready to cruise the streets you'll also have to choose the right spoiler, window colour, air scoop and exhaust – side-mounted exhausts are great because the flames shoot out either side when the nitrous is activated.

By far the most pimping mod we saw had to be air suspension. With this expensive mod added your car rides high, but as soon as you come to a stop the car automatically lowers itself to within a couple of inches of the ground. Just image the look on your mate's face when you cruise up and challenge him to a race with this crazy mod.

HITTING THE STREET

Once your ride is tuned to perfection it's time to get down to the meat of *Midnight Club 3* – intense street racing. Time your handbrake start well enough and you'll score a little turbo boost that helps you get ahead of the pack. Slipstreaming behind other cars during the race is

YOUR GARAGE OR MINE?

With *Midnight Club 3*'s staggering range of modifications it's possible to spend up to an hour in the garage, fussing over minute details like exactly which vinyl and paintjob combo makes your ride look the meanest. Best of all, once you've got your car looking as pimped as possible you can save it to Memory Card to take online later or over to a mate's place for split-screen racing. Did we mention that the online racing supports yourself and seven of your mates battling it out through the streets of three famous American cities? We can't wait for the stroke of *Midnight*.



Burnout 3's not the only game you can spark it up in

number of short-cuts like side alleys, jumps and building foyers you can smash through.

The Race Editor (which lets you place the racing checkpoints wherever you want) opens up into a much more exciting prospect with *Midnight Club 3*'s new features. Imagine how far the jaws of your competitors will drop (in either a split-screen or an eight-player online race) when you win a course you've created by hitting a 200m-plus jump over the finish line. One of the jumps we saw was so huge the car cleared two overhead train lines before landing back on the road.

Road ragers who don't like having to put up with the invulnerable cars in the *Gran Turismo* and *Need for Speed* series will be glad to hear that despite all of *Midnight Club 3*'s vehicles being officially licensed real-life models, Rockstar has still managed to negotiate fully damageable cars. Although the busted-up cars might look like they'll never drive again, we were pleased to find out that the damage is only cosmetic. This may be a little unrealistic but who really wants to sit out the rest of a lengthy race after snapping an axle?

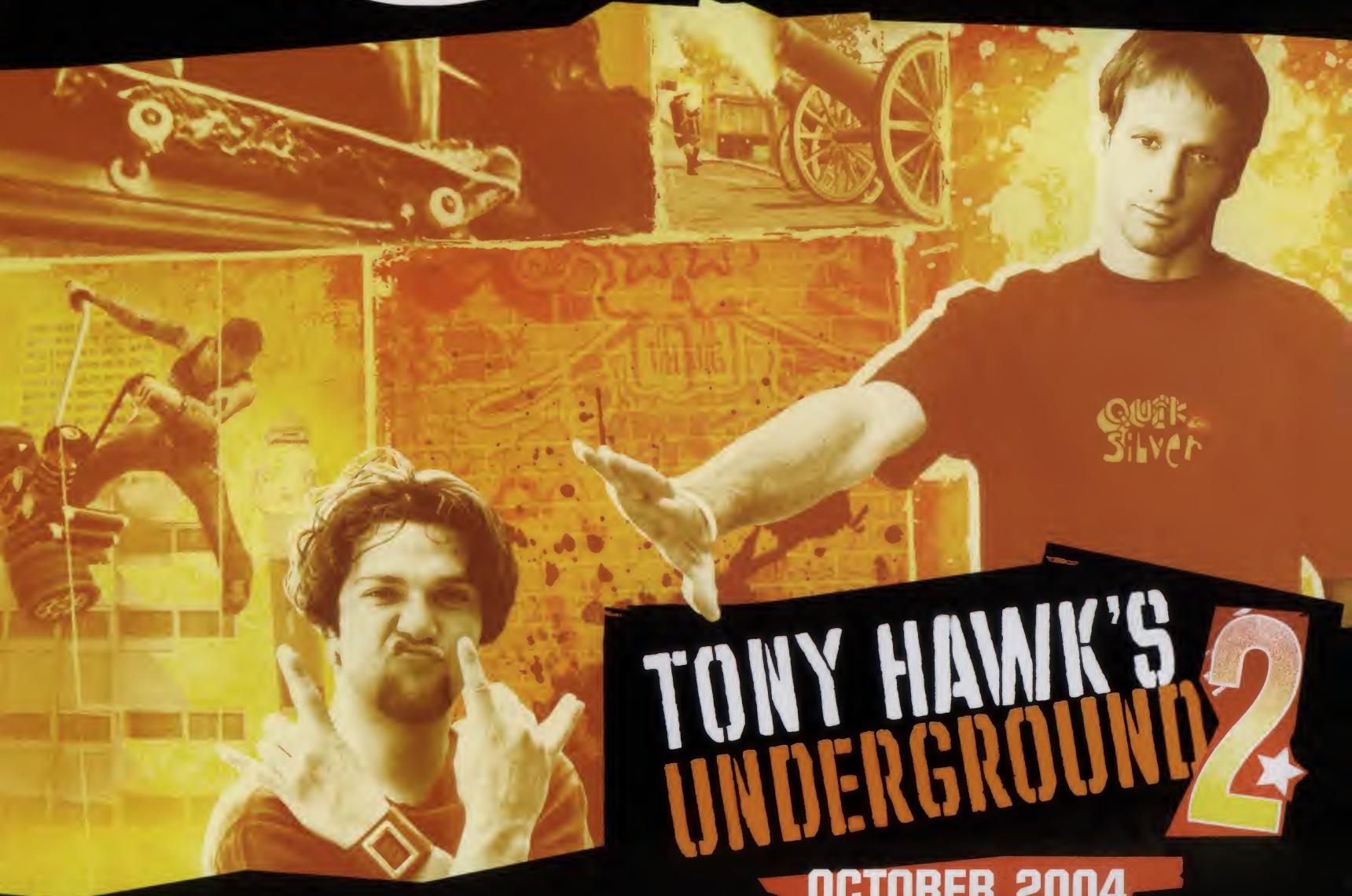
With more bling than Snoop Dogg's jeweller, almost as many cars as *GTA: San Andreas*, official models and modifications and a thumping great eight-player online mode, this latest *Midnight Club* will have the goods to impress even the most jaded racing enthusiast. The jury's still out on whether *Midnight Club 3* will have enough fuel in the tank to outpace the established juggernauts like *Need for Speed Underground 2* and *Gran Turismo 4* but it's definitely off to a great start. 

IT'S A CRAZY WORLD...

SOMEONE'S GOTTA



KIT IT UP!



OCTOBER 2004



PlayStation® 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



ACTIVISION

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EYES TO THE FRONT

TAKING A PEEK INSIDE THE HOTTEST LENS OF ALL TIME

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU What you had for breakfast, what you found in your handkerchief this morning, the way you tie your shoelaces. The games you like to play and the way you like to play them. That special feeling you get when you're basking in the glow of the PS2 start-up screen. You, you, you. But don't worry. You're not alone. Someone understands. Which is why we have EyeToy.

When it first arrived back in late 2003, it took the gaming world by storm. It was new, different, and it took gaming to a whole new level, putting you directly into the action. *EyeToy: Play*, the game that came packaged with the device, brought something entirely new to PlayStation gaming. There were no controllers, there was no couch-potatoin', it was just you, the screen and some totally insane living. *EyeToy: Groove* stepped it up a notch by having you try out your dance moves for the unforgiving little camera – the more you'd had to drink (or the earlier it was in

the morning), the funnier it was. A few third-party games have so far used EyeToy for mini-games – *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*, for example – or, in the case of *SingStar*, have had an EyeToy feature added (so you could watch yourself being a pop idol). It's becoming more and more integrated into our gaming experience – and so it should.

Now, of course we haven't seen EyeToy's entire repertoire just yet. What we have seen has been mighty intriguing, but it's about to get a whole lot more so. There are quite a few possibilities as far as gaming's most innovative peripheral is concerned, and we're only just beginning to tap into them. We hooked up with Ron Festejo, EyeToy producer at Sony's London development studio, for the lowdown and a first look at some of the upcoming titles.

EYETOY: PLAY 2 If you played the first game, won't be entirely unfamiliar. Like its predecessor, it will be set out as 12 games for you to delve into, with assorted craziness contained therein. But don't be fooled though – *Play 2* has some tidy little surprises up its sleeve. You'll still be cavorting around your loungeroom like a Bedlam escapee, but it's the little – and not so little – added bonuses that make *Play 2* something we all wanna be a part of.

Probably the first and foremost of these is the new SpyCam. It's exactly what it sounds like. You can set it up so that the screen's off, but the camera's rolling, and the instant it detects movement, an alarm will sound – which can be preset by you, and can be anything you like, from a foghorn, to your voice blaring a "Get the hell away from my TV, you dirty hippie!" It takes a motion capture every 10 seconds or so, and it's password-activated, so that only the person with the password can shut it off. You can covertly set it up anywhere you have a TV and a PS2 to catch your housemates →

New titles like *EyeToy: Play 2* are making even greater use of Sony's innovative camera





"WE WANTED TO
MAKE IT A
COMMUNICATION
DEVICE," SAYS
RON FESTEJO,
PRODUCER



→ doing something embarrassing, or to protect your personal space. Sounds fun? You betcha. We're taking bets on what crazy things we're going to catch Richie doing.

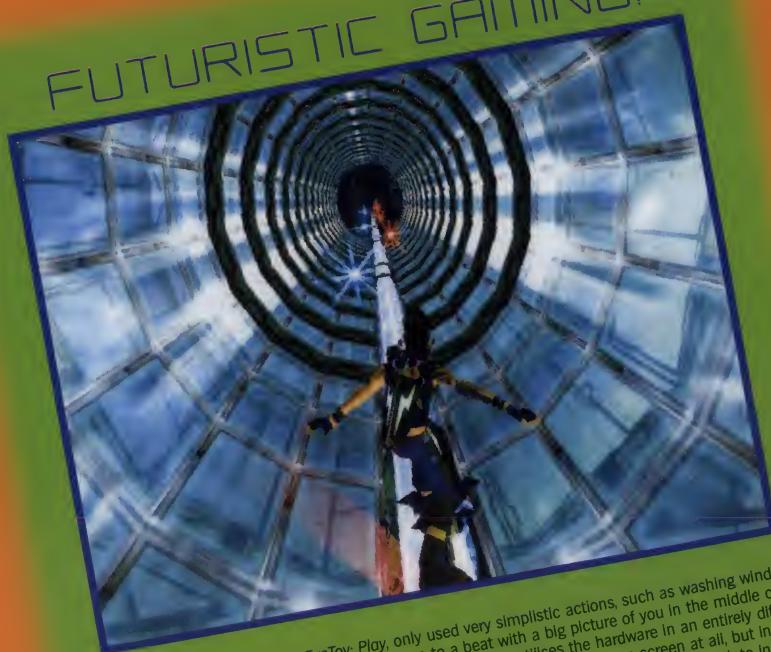
Even the more conventional games have been given a slight twist, bringing something new to the gameplay introduced by *Play*, making use of the EyeToy's capabilities to sense colour and shape rather than just movement. For instance, the Colour-Cam will enable you to use brightly-coloured objects to play the games. The one in particular that caught our attention was *Citrus Fighter* – where you get a piece of fruit, wave it around on the screen, and watch the characters play "stacks-on" with your oranges and apples. It works with similarly-coloured objects, as well – an orange tennis ball, or a red-painted shrunken head, for instance – since the receptor is picking up the colour of the object, and not just your movement. Or there's *Cut-Out Cam*, where your body is cut out of your real-life surroundings and superimposed onto a backdrop, TV green-room style. You can then enter various areas and play with the interactive environments – causing planets to spin, or touching the places you wish to zoom in on. And just to stretch EyeToy just that tiny bit further, some games even use voice recognition via the in-built microphone – which will see you shouting and capering in a manner that, in any other situation, would see you well and truly certified.

While *Play* 2 is all about immersion in a fantasy game-land, *EyeToy: Chat* is all about communication. "We wanted to make it a communication device," explains Ron of the EyeToy's development, "which is what *Chat* is doing right now". Well, that's all very lovely; but what, exactly, is *Chat*?

Well, we've all used telephones; and we've all at least seen a webcam once or twice in our lives. *Chat* is sort of a combination of the two. Teleconferencing isn't just for boardrooms any more – apparently it's for loungerooms, bedrooms and whichever room you damned well feel like (except the toilet. Some things we just don't need to know). Remember those old sci-fi movies, where people could video-call each other from their homes? Now you're getting it.

Unfortunately, Ron was travelling and didn't have a PS2 nearby when we talked to him but it is now possible to avoid the expensive phone bills and interview people (or just chat) using nothing but *EyeToy: Chat*. Apparently, it's as easy as falling off a log – you get your PS2, your EyeToy, your Network Adaptor and your TV, hook the whole lot up, and away you go. If you have

FUTURISTIC GAMING!



The first EyeToy game, *EyeToy: Play*, only used very simplistic actions, such as washing windows, squishing little guys, and moving in time to a beat with a big picture of you in the middle of the screen. But Harmonix's upcoming title *EyeToy: AntiGrav* utilises the hardware in an entirely different way. The camera doesn't show the player on screen at all, but instead analyses the way they move in front of their TV screen and translates their actions into in-game movements. The possibilities for games based on this kind of technology are mind-boggling!



There are some games that help you improve co-ordination. There are some games that teach you basic rhythm skills. In arcades, you will even find some games that show you how to dance like a nerd. And then there was *EyeToy: Groove*. Following the same basic principle as the popular *Dancing Stage*, you had to hit items in time with the beat. Only, being an EyeToy game, you had to wave your arms about to do it. Plus, it had all sorts of little pink, sparkly effects... and that, you just gotta respect.

broadband Internet, it's unlimited, and it's free – you can chat for as long as you like with someone anywhere in the world – or sit with friends and play on-screen chess, draughts or battleships, and enjoy their dismay in a visual capacity when you whup their sorry arses.

You can't *Chat* to just anyone, though – you'll have to give personal authorisation to those of your friends you want to communicate with, meaning that *Chat* can be as safe as you want to make it. "It's not a case of speaking to someone and you don't know what they look like, they'll be on your screen," says Ron, "and you can only speak to people you give authorisation to". We guess that rules out prank-calling the Sony bosses. And while the video chat is one-on-one only, our inside scoop tells us that there will also be voice chat for up to 16 people at a time, and text chat for up to 256! If you know that many people... get a room, dammit!

EYETOY: ANTI GRAV is another goody on the way, from Harmonix, the masterminds behind *Frequency*, *Amplitude* and *Karaoke Revolution*. All about balance and manoeuvrability, *AntiGrav* uses special gloves to track movement rather than a controller, and while it might definitely take a little bit of practise to get the hang of, there's definitely some addictive fun to be had if the Harmonix name is anything to go by.

You'll control an on-screen character on a hoverboard, turning your head to turn corners, ducking to... well, duck, and jumping to jump. You'll use your hands to collect items, all the while twisting and weaving to avoid obstacles, perform trick manoeuvres and grind along the rails. Also, as you would expect from a Harmonix title, the game features an interactive soundtrack that you unlock as you go.

AntiGrav will mark a number of firsts for EyeToy. It will be the first EyeToy game to feature character-driven gameplay, the first to use the movement of the entire body in order to control what happens on-screen, and the first fully-EyeToy title which isn't all about the mini-games.

A number of top-secret EyeToy games are also in development around the globe and, with the amazing scope for revolutionary game design available with EyeToy's latest technical developments, they're ones to keep an excited eye out for in the near future.

It may seem that there isn't much more that EyeToy can do at the moment. But the technology has far from reached its limit, and it's already come a very long way since *EyeToy: Play* less than a year ago.

Games like *This Is Soccer 2005* will be using EyeToy to map your 3D facial characteristics onto a character on the soccer field, so you can play as yourself. Perhaps it won't be long before most games utilise this feature – so that your on-screen character is like a little miniature you, rather than some hodgepodge of polygons. Yes, EyeToy is growing up fast, and it's taking the rest of the videogame world with it! 

M I L L A J O V O V I C H

My name is Alice
and I remember everything.



A dark, atmospheric poster for 'Resident Evil: Apocalypse'. The central figure is Alice (Milla Jovovich), shown from the waist up, wearing a black, heavily armored vest over a white tank top. She has a serious, determined expression and is looking directly at the viewer. She is surrounded by a glowing, circular energy field with intricate patterns. The background is a dark, smoky cityscape. The title 'RESIDENT EVIL: Apocalypse' is written in large, metallic, three-dimensional letters at the bottom.

RESIDENT EVIL: Apocalypse

(M) 15+ RECOMMENDED FOR MATURE
AUDIENCES 16 YEARS AND OVER
MEDIUM LEVEL VIOLENCE
MEDIUM LEVEL COARSE LANGUAGE

SCREEN GEMS, DAVIS FILMS / IMPACT (CANADA) INC., CONSTANTIN FILM (UK) LIMITED PRESENT A CONSTANTIN FILM (UK) LIMITED / DAVIS FILMS / IMPACT (CANADA) INC. PRODUCTION. MILLA JOVOVICH, STEPHANIE GUILLORY, JUDI FEAR, THOMAS KRETSCHEMANN, WITH JARED HARRIS AND MIKE EPPS. 'RESIDENT EVIL: Apocalypse' DIRECTED BY LIZ GALLACHER. MUSIC BY JEFF DANNA. SCREENPLAY BY MARY MCLEOD. PRODUCED BY PAUL DENHAM AUSTEBERRY. EDITED BY EDDIE HAMILTON. PROPS BY ALISON O'BRIEN. PROPS DESIGNER CHRISTIAN SEBALDT. DEREK ROGERS, C.S.C. BASED UPON CAPCOM'S VIDEO GAME 'RESIDENT EVIL'. PRODUCED BY HIROYUKI KOBAYASHI, DAN KLETZKY. PROPS DESIGNER BERNIE EICHINGER. SAMUEL HADIDA, ROBERT KULZER, VICTOR HADIDA. PROPS DESIGNER JEREMY BOLT, PAUL W.S. ANDERSON, DON CARMODY. PROPS DESIGNER PAUL W.S. ANDERSON. WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER WITT

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Coming Soon

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— PSM

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— Electronic Gaming Monthly

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— GamePro

“...It Has Skyrocketed To The Top Of My Most-Wanted Games List.”

— Gamespy



Summon Eccentric Characters To Do Your Dirty Work, Like This Poor Old Bastard Who Finds Traps...the Hard Way!



PlayStation.2



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PLAY-TEST



WELCOME!

Despite the wealth of quality games this month it's been *Star Wars: Battlefront* that has refused to budge from my PS2. Being able to shoot down one of your mates whizzing past on a

Speederbike before jumping into an X-Wing yourself and having a dogfight with another couple of your buddies in TIE Fighters is easily the most fun I've had since Stacey and Cindy told me they wanted to try something new.

NARAYAN PATTISON
DEPUTY EDITOR

REVIEW CHARTER

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE'S reviews are the best in the business. Our squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone. And we love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our comments and scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here in Australia and overseas. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

10/10	Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
09/10	A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
08/10	Highly recommended
07/10	Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
06/10	Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
05/10	An average game
04/10	Poor, but still with the odd moment
03/10	Extremely disappointing
02/10	To be avoided
01/10	Beer mat

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score 9/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!

The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!

The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.



SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

The sneakiest raccoon on PS2 creeps back for a stellar sequel!

54



CRASH TWINSANITY

Crash teams up with his nemesis Cortex for this hilarious sequel



58

SILENT HILL 4

Four times the fear!

62



STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT 64

16 players in the one Star Wars battle!

66

NBA BALLERS

NBA Jam meets Fight Club

68



VIEWTIFUL JOE

Excellent 2D cartoon capers

The Sly games have earned themselves a reputation for style



PLATFORM

SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

Sly tries to jam the platform crown into his bag of loot

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SUCKER PUNCH
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.SUCKERPUNCH.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

X BACK STORY

Sly 2: Band of Thieves is Seattle-based developer Sucker Punch's second game on PS2 – the first being Sly Raccoon. Overseas, the game was dubbed Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus. It seems Sucker Punch has realised if kids can't pronounce it, they can't ask Santa for it!

BETTER THAN

SLY RACCOON

WORSE THAN

JAK II: RENEGADE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Great visual style and perfectly offbeat character design

What they need to fix

Minor camera problems. And Jak isn't in it... maybe that's asking too much

It looks like developer Sucker Punch has learned a valuable lesson. Back in 2002, Sly Raccoon hit shelves with the intention of becoming the PS2's platform gaming shining light. Unfortunately, at least for Sucker Punch, Ratchet and Clank had been shining that light rather brightly already and promptly continued to shine it up Sly's furry rodent backside. That said, Sly's first outing was promising. Sure, it lacked a little originality, was a bit short and only 22 people bought it, but it was a commendable first effort from a company whose only other game was something called *Robot on Wheels* for the Nintendo 64. This time around though, Sly is getting the jump on his upstart competitors by being first off the blocks.

Sly picks up where the last game left off. It's been two years since Sly Cooper recovered the Thievius Raccoonus, a Cooper family heirloom and a kind of *Breaking and Entering for Dummies*. At the end of the first instalment Sly laid the smackdown on Clockwerk, a robotic menace intent on eliminating the Coopers, and dismantled him. Unfortunately, word reaches Sly that Clockwerk's parts have been recovered and placed in a museum, which won't bode well for him should they ever fall into the wrong hands. Into the wrong hands, however, is exactly where they fall. A criminal organisation known only as the Klaww Gang has made off with the parts and now Sly must retrieve them before history repeats itself and he ends up toast.

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

Far less linear than its predecessor, Sly 2 is broken up into a series of episodes, each unfolding as a different

heist as expert thief Sly snatches each Clockwerk part back from its new and nefarious owner. The levels of Sly Raccoon have been replaced by larger free-roaming environments that you're encouraged to explore. The exaggerated surroundings are a delight to behold and the levels are charming and varied.

The focus in Sly 2 is on preparation and teamwork. Each heist is carefully planned and you'll only be able to proceed with the thievery once all the foundations have been laid. The structure of Sly 2 always gives you the feeling you're working toward short-term goals and really engages you the whole time – you'll find it hard to put down the control pad until you've successfully pilfered the item you've been working on. Before each job you'll

"The levels of Sly Raccoon have been replaced by larger free-roaming environments"

need to do various reconnaissance missions, set up diversions, retrieve important articles and weaken your target's defences, to name just a few.

It won't only be Sly who'll be making all these preparations either, as his compadres Bentley and Murray have returned as playable characters. Bentley is a slightly neurotic turtle with an inferiority complex, too much brain and not enough balls. Murray, on the other hand, is a big pink hippopotamus who constantly refers to himself in the third person and likes to use words like

"I KNOW THIS MUSIC"

While the voice acting in Sly 2 may not exactly match its contemporaries, Sucker Punch has created some great sound for its latest offering. A dynamic score means the music changes to suit your actions, so if you're sneaking up on some poor, unsuspecting fool or slinking against a wall, you'll hear obligatory Looney Tunes-style sneaky notes each time you plant your foot. If you go faster, it also goes faster. Very cool.





"triumphant" and such. Bentley meticulously crafts each mission and takes care of any demolition or computer work that needs attention while Murray is the large blunt object to call upon when you need a large blunt object.

While it will still be up to Sly to do most of the work, the ability to switch characters adds an entirely new dynamic to the game. Bentley is equipped with remote bombs and a sleeping dart crossbow that, funnily enough, puts enemies to sleep. Murray can pick up and throw objects and usually lets his fists do the talking.

Both of these characters foster entirely new approaches to your objectives. While Sly has a huge list of sneaky moves available to make his way around each level, Bentley and Murray must use their own strengths. Bentley may not have Sly's super skills but his crossbow means you can take out enemies from afar and, while they're dozing, sneak up and plant a bomb on them. A few seconds later the guard will be vapourised and all your problems will be solved. Bentley's safari hat and thick glasses may make him look like a nerd, but he can be a ruthless little amphibian. Murray has no need for such subterfuge and understatement is a completely foreign word to him. Decked out like a pro-wrestler from the '80s, complete with fringed gloves and goggles, he's a veritable walking sledgehammer. "The Murray", as he refers to himself, has a much more powerful repertoire of punches and belly flops and has the ability to cut a swathe through large numbers of opponents. His throwing ability is much more than gimmick too, letting him pick up barrels, chairs and even knocked-out assailants and toss them about.

The objectives are character-sensitive, and mean you'll be required to swap to the right character to complete the mission. Blue for Sly, green for Bentley and macho pink for Murray. You won't be aimlessly running about either, as your objectives are clearly displayed against the sky like the Bat-Signal. Making your way toward the light will guide you to your next mission. And if you see George Clooney on the way,

I SPY

Lost? Can't find a clear route? Click the R3 button and bring up your binoculon. Not only can you scope out your surroundings and zoom in on the best path to your new objective, you can use it to actively avoid confrontations. You'll also receive updates from your posse much like Snake's codec in *Metal Gear Solid*. Fortunately Sly only chats for a few seconds, not half an hour.





Levels are like most American gamers - huge

→ PREY FOR THE HUNTED

The enemies in *Sly 2* may not look that smart, but they all know how to use the environment and they'll chase you until they lose sight of you. The auto lock on enemies is well implemented so you may be able to take a few of them on at a time, but some of the larger guards are really dangerous. Taking out enemies is great fun and yields you a *Batman*-esque 'Powl' caption and trumpet blast, but your best bet is to stay out of sight whenever possible.



give him a thump in the chops for us.

More often than not, a combination of all three characters will be required for the final heist in each level. For instance, in the second episode the gang travel to India to retrieve Clockwerk's wings. The wings, however, need to be plucked from a statue in the middle of a crowded ballroom. While Bentley destroys a nearby bridge to lure the guards away from the party, Sly holds the attention of the crowd with an impressive dancing display and Murray lowers himself *Mission: Impossible*-style into the room, grabs the wings and hightails it out of there. Bentley then covers Murray's escape through the palace by dropping bombs from his remote-controlled helicopter and the trio get the hell out of Dodge.

CREEPING UP SLOWLY

For Sly, there's an almost infinite number of ways to make your way around and tackle each objective. You can either stick to the street, hiding under tables and behind walls or you can take to the rooftops, leaping from building to building, climbing up poles and dashing across wires and ropes. Sly takes more than a few cues from *Splinter Cell's* Sam Fisher in the sneaking department. His gadgets may not be as cool but he sure is an agile little fella.

What really sets Sly apart from other PS2 platformers is that you can't just sprint around and rush your objectives. You'll need to be precise and patient to pick you way through the guards. It might start out easy, but the later levels are considerably less forgiving. Another cool improvement in *Sly 2* is the use of sound. The noise you're making is represented by expanding circles similar to the gauge used in *Manhunt*. Running makes more noise and guards will investigate if they hear you clumsily galloping past. Sound can be used to your advantage though, as you can cause a ruckus to distract potentially problematic guards and quickly sneak past afterwards.

In addition to the platforming action there's a variety of mini-games to break up the sneaking around. At one stage Murray must man a laser turret to shoot down a helicopter that's firing missiles at him. Not only do you have to waste the chopper, but you need to destroy the missiles before they reach the turret. The devilishly charming Sly will also need to bust a move on the dancefloor more

than once by following on-screen prompts and hitting buttons to a specific rhythm. Some of these mini-games are certainly better than others, but they all offer a welcome, albeit brief, diversion.

Sly 2 has retained the cel-shaded comic book look of the original but a complete overhaul means the visuals have been cranked up to 11. The cartoon-style graphics are a vibrant feast, the environments are large and impressive and the character design is exemplary. The crew at Sucker Punch should be commended for showing how cel-shaded games can still look da bomb when the technique is executed well.

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

Returning players might be happy to know that the sometimes infuriating one-hit deaths and limited lives of the first game have been dropped like an annoying girlfriend and replaced with a health bar and as many lives as you need. You can collect more health by defeating enemies and destroying scenery, both of which yield familiar coins. This time around, however, the coins aren't used to buy extra lives - they're used to purchase character upgrades. Back in the safehouse between checking his emails and watching Paris Hilton become a movie star, Bentley can access "ThiefNet" and acquire upgrades for the different characters, such as more powerful attacks and a more formidable arsenal. Further proof that you really can buy anything on the Internet.

You can also make extra cash by pickpocketing unsuspecting guards around each level. All you need to do is sneak up behind them and press the **Ⓐ** button and the sticky-fingered raccoon will liberate their Grandmother's birthday money from their back pocket. Dig a little deeper and you might recover an item you can pawn later, like a piece of jewellery or a silver pen. Valuable items are also dotted around each level, like paintings and vases, which can also be nicked. Bring them back to the safehouse without being hit (otherwise you lose it) and you can sell your loot for cash on ThiefNet. Think of it like eBay - only

"More often than not, a combination of all three characters will be required for the final heist"

a little less ethical.

One thing that mars *Sly 2* is the movement of the camera, which can be a little frustrating at times. For the most part it's cooperative, but if you back it into a corner it becomes extremely stubborn. Being able to switch to the "binocular" view helps, but it remains mildly annoying. Also some of the missions are a little more filler than killer and you may occasionally find some of them descend into being chores.

It may be unashamedly aimed at a fractionally younger audience than *Jak* or *Ratchet*, but there's plenty here to keep big kids happy. It may be skulking over familiar territory, and your parents probably told you before that playing with your raccoon will make you go blind, but *Sly 2* is more than worthy of a visit while we patiently wait for *Jak 3*. **► Luke Reilly**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Gorgeous locations and fantastic art style
Sound	08	Great atmosphere and sound effects throughout
Gameplay	08	<i>Splinter Cell</i> meets <i>Crash Bandicoot</i> . Superb
Lifespan	07	Twice as long as the first one, but it's no epic

Great platforming for all ages. With plenty of substance, it deserves to stand beside *Jak* and *Ratchet*.

08



ROCKY

LEGENDS™



Rocky Balboa (left) Apollo Creed (centre-left) Clubber Lang (centre-right) Ivan Drago (right).

TRAINING MAKES LEGENDS



(above) Clubber pulls a special move.



(above) Drago works hard on his stamina.



Rocky Balboa (left) lands a large hook across the face of Ivan Drago (right).

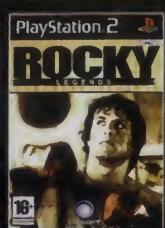
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
MGM
MGM INTERACTIVE



XBOX

PlayStation®2

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NEW DOG, OLD TRICKS

There's plenty of the old Crash approach in *Twinsanity*, and typical Crash set-pieces litter the story. There's the staple reverse-perspective sections where the character is running toward you, trying to outrun things like a hungry walrus, a mass of bugs or a school bus swinging beneath Cortex's blimp (that last one will make sense when you see it). The boss battles are nothing new either; impossible until you work out the exact tactics to use, after which you can beat them in your sleep. There are a few occasions where Crash will use Cortex as a snowboard, which is surprisingly well done. *SSX eat your heart out!*

PLATFORMER

CRASH TWINSANITY

Crash has another bash at his former glory

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI
DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES
PRICE: \$69.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.VUGAMES.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

X BACK STORY

Since his departure from original developer Naughty Dog, Crash has appeared in three PS2 games. Crash Twinsanity is developer Traveller's Tales second attempt at the franchise. The maker of Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex, it has also churned out a handful of Disney games such as Finding Nemo.

Ever since Naughty Dog pawned Crash Bandicoot for a fat wad of cash, the simple-minded marsupial has fallen on tough times. He hasn't had a hit since the days of *Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped* and *Crash Team Racing* back on PSone, and the high-grade crop of current PS2 platformers has left him without a pot to, well, you know what in. *The Wrath of Cortex*, Crash's first appearance on PS2 was met with a lukewarm response both critically and commercially and the less said about *Crash Nitro Kart* the better.

Crash Twinsanity is the latest attempt for a Crash resurrection of biblical proportions. It's definitely a step in the right direction for the mad-mannered marsupial, and Crash is in his best form since his PSone heyday. Anybody familiar with the *Crash Bandicoot* series will instantly recognise the Crash trademarks; boxes to be broken, crystals to collect and wumpa fruit to eat. The funny thing is that a large chunk of the target audience of *Twinsanity* were still crapping in their pants when Crash originally debuted on the original PlayStation about eight years ago, while the rest of us are now waiting for Naughty Dog's *Jak 3*.

There's plenty of fun to be had in *Twinsanity* though. The gameplay is fairly straightforward and linear but the worlds are much larger than last time round. They're also quite varied too, with levels spanning Crash's tropical island home, underground mines, Cortex's ice lair, a gothic boarding school and an entirely different dimension where everything appears to have been reversed. Checkpoints are fairly frequent so you

shouldn't find yourself stuck in a rut too often, but unlike many modern platformers, *Twinsanity* has retained the finite lives of the Crash games of yore. Mess up one too many times and you'll be staring down the barrel of a continue screen, which will send you back to the start of the level. Word to the wise – don't mess up.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

For Crash newbies there's a basic tutorial level to bring you up to speed, but even if you haven't picked up a Crash game in four years you'll be an expert again in a matter of minutes. It looks like business as usual for Crash when Dr Neo Cortex dupes him into a trap and sets about trying to destroy him with a giant robotic bandicoot. Once you've dispatched the marsupial mech, however, the focus changes. Not content with yet another Crash and Cortex showdown, Vivendi is shaking things up a little by teaming them up against a common foe. Despite the fact they've been at each other's throats for almost a decade, they now need to work together to make sure the world is still around for them to be at each other's throats for another decade. Two inter-dimensional talking parrots have set their sights on global destruction and it's now up to you to stop them.

During the game you'll either be controlling Crash, Cortex, Crash and Cortex together or new addition, Nina Cortex. You'll mostly be in control of Crash though, who is the most flexible character with the broadest range of moves. He retains his spin attack, slide attack, body-slams and his double jump, all of which you'll need to negotiate the sometimes tricky levels. Cortex would have trouble



BETTER THAN

CRASH: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

WORSE THAN

JAK II: RENEGADE

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Addictive and challenging. Instantly familiar characters

What they need to fix

Much more polish is needed to keep up with the pack

More action than you'd expect from an Aussie marsupial



jumping out of bed but carries a laser pistol, which evens the score somewhat. Cortex's niece Nina has some interesting abilities, one of which is an extendable arm that is perhaps a little too similar to the swingshot in the *Ratchet and Clank* games. She may have a face like a dropped pie with sauce, but at least she's talented.

There'll also be a variety of occasions where you'll be controlling two characters in tandem. As Crash you'll drag Cortex behind you, and you'll need to adjust your approach. While dragging Cortex along you'll no longer be able to jump anywhere near as far as normal but there are benefits. With Cortex in tow your spinning range is increased and you can use his giant, mallet-shaped head as... well, a giant mallet. You can also throw him over gaps so he can operate switches and levers well out of your reach.

The levels with Crash and Cortex together are the most puzzle-oriented. We're not talking *Tomb Raider* here, but nonetheless you'll need to survey your surroundings before you dive in half-cocked. At one stage you'll need to jam Cortex into a pipe and send him through an underground sewer system. Before you do so,

however, you'll need to ensure all the tubes are in place. At another point Cortex is trying to escape a swarm of bees, with the obligatory bee hive stuck on his head, no less. As he blindly runs along, the camera shifts to a side-scrolling position and you'll need to run parallel to him to clear obstacles and deactivate any traps.

There are also more chances to interact with the environment and use it to your advantage this time around. Early on you might notice a seductively shiny gem strategically placed in the centre of a field full of nitro crates. Instead of risking an instant cremation you're able to chase some nearby chickens into the crates, which explode and leave you a clear path to your prize. Later on Crash needs to use Cortex as a hammer to get rid of some giant worms from a local farmer's garden. As each worm rears its ugly head Crash squashes it with Cortex's ugly head. Once they're dispatched his wumpa trees will grow, giving you a way to reach the ledge above.

Perhaps one of the niftiest additions to *Crash Twinsanity* is a rolling Looney Tunes-esque brawl which sees Crash and Cortex pummelling one another as they careen down a mineshaft. Controlling the brawl is almost identical to controlling the atlasphere from *The Wrath of Cortex*. A few more inventive twists like this wouldn't have gone astray.

It's also great to see that the typically infurating boss battles haven't been lost in translation either. You'll square off against a variety of Crash's super-villain alumni during the game including Cortex himself, a giant stone Idol, N. Gin, Dingodile, Uka Uka's evil twin Aku Aku, N. Trophy and a cranky old headmistress with sweater cows the size of K2.

Multiple characters could have been a disaster for the struggling franchise – the final nail in the endangered furball's coffin – but instead they saved it. Crash needed a makeover like this and Traveller's Tales has delivered it.

THE BAD NEWS

It's not all roses with *Twinsanity* though, and underneath the bright and colourful exterior are a few faults which leave us a little doubtful. *Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped* endowed the bucky bandicoot with a number of special moves like the tornado spin, supercharged body slam, sprinting, the fruit bazooka and the double jump. The only

one of these available when you boot up *Twinsanity* is the last one. Did Crash forget to dust off his wumpa fruit panzerfaust? Crash's selection of moves is getting a little long in the tooth, and he would have benefited from a little more spice.

Perhaps the most frustrating thing in *Twinsanity*, though, is the botching of the trusty magic masks. Collecting three masks used to spark up tribal drums and render Crash invincible from everything except falling into a hole. Crates exploded as you ran through them and enemies and explosives disintegrated as you charged through the level. This has, unfortunately, been completely forgotten in *Twinsanity*. Despite the fact you've collected three masks and you're supposed to be invincible, a brush with a nitro crate will still give you an instant cremation, and enemies and boxes simply get in your way – they aren't destroyed. So what's the point of collecting masks? Some kind of explanation of what's happening between levels would have been good, too. One minute you're on Cortex's dirigible, the next you're waiting outside his secret lab with no idea how you just got there. We know it's not *War and Peace* lads, but a little explanation here and there wouldn't hurt.

What's painfully clear though is that *Crash Twinsanity* is certainly working with old material. Platform games have come a long way since Crash first strapped on his sneakers and while *Twinsanity* is great fun, he'll need to step up his game to challenge for the top spot once again. If *Jak 3* is walking into your hotel room to find Miss Universe wearing nothing but a pink ribbon, then *Crash Twinsanity* is the mint on your pillow; they're both welcome, even though one's considerably more satisfying than the other. **Luke Reilly**

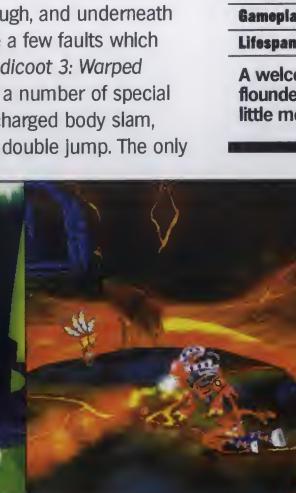
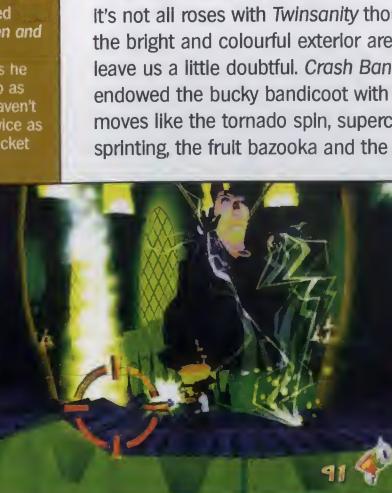
PAY DAY



So serious were Vivendi with getting the humour right they hired Jordan Reichek, producer and director for cartoons like *The Ren and Stimpy Show*, *Animaniacs* and *The Simpsons* as a consultant. Just watch as Cortex struggles to explain to his penguin guards he can't afford to pay them because *The Wrath of Cortex* didn't do as well as they had hoped. The ensuing stand off is a hoot; you haven't seen anything until you've seen an evil scientist with a head twice as big as his body face off against a flightless arctic bird with a rocket strapped to its back.



More crates than a uni student's house



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	They're not pushing any boundaries but they'll do
Sound	08	Suitably annoying music, great voice acting
Gameplay	08	A few major problems ruin the fun
Lifespan	07	Plenty to unlock if you revisit and find the gems

A welcome return to form for the floundering franchise, but it needed a little more attention to detail.

07

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RETURN OF THE GENERAL LEE™

Out
October
2004



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PlayStation®2

XBOX

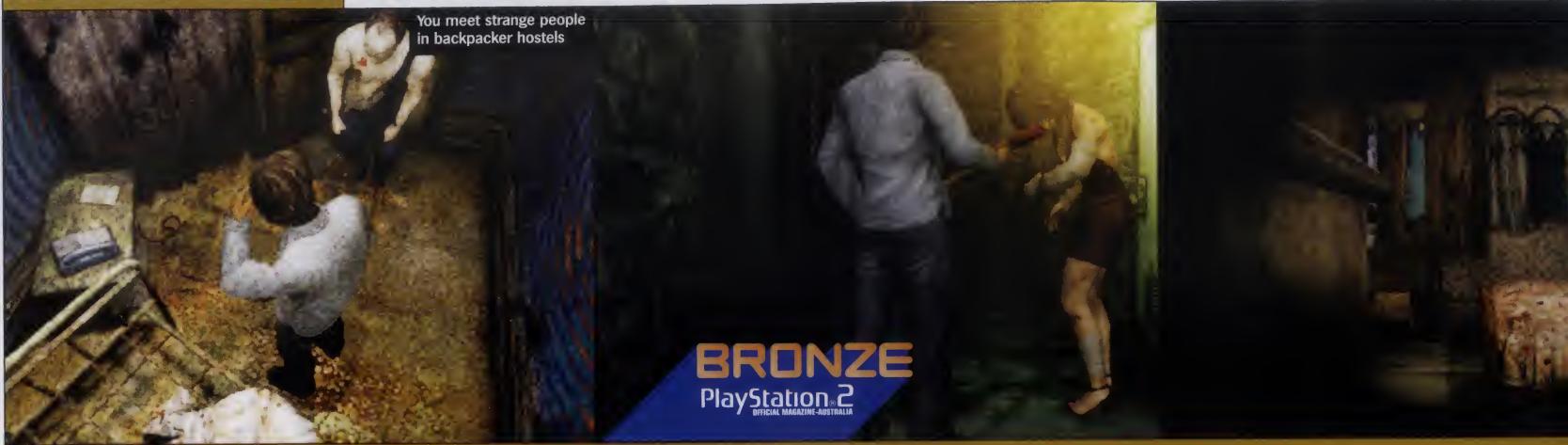


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BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

SURVIVAL-HORROR

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

Get those rubber trousers ready – it's time to go back to *Silent Hill*!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.SH2004.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Konami has thoroughly creeped out PlayStation gamers with their *Silent Hill* series, with the games getting weird and weirder as time goes on. Hot on the heels of the last PS2 edition comes *Silent Hill 4: The Room*, where the company has tried a couple of neat new tricks.

E

veryone's felt trapped in his or her house at one time or another. However, for Henry Townsend, the hapless hero of Konami's

Silent Hill 4: The Room, the problem is horribly literal. Rather than being stuck inside in an "oh, it's raining and *Showgirls* is on the telly – I can't be bothered going to the shops" kinda way, Henry's front door is actually chained shut. Also mystical forces prevent him from opening any of the windows. Not only that, but the TV barely works and when it does all it shows is demonic visions – and we don't mean Bert Newton. Basically, things are looking pretty rough.

Then Harry discovers a hole in his bathroom wall. Very much like the premise of bizarre movie *Being John Malkovich*, this leads to a tunnel to another dimension. Unlike the one in the Spike Jonze-directed flick, this tunnel goes straight to Hell.

SILENT HILL RELOADED?

Silent Hill 4 is coming out pretty soon after *Silent Hill 3*, and this has worried a lot of fans. Well, relax because the first thing you should know is this is a worthy sequel and a belter of a survival horror title in its own right. However, comparisons to the previous game are inevitable and should be gotten out of the way immediately.

First up, *Silent Hill 4* is a very different game to its predecessor. *Silent Hill 3* gave you loads of weapons, piled on the big monsters and bosses and focused very heavily on combat. It also had puzzles that didn't really make much sense. *Silent Hill 4* is a game where weapons are rare, and breakable, the monsters are

smaller but creepier and the puzzles, while still mind-bending, often involve lateral thinking rather than psychic powers or a firm grasp of the absurd.

NICE PLACE. VERY... COSY

The most telling aspect of the game's structure is your apartment. It acts like a home base and is, in fact, the only place in the entire game you can save. This is an aspect of the title that gamers will either love or hate. On the one hand it gives you a place to store your stuff, prepare for each foray into the netherworld and regain your health (your health bar fills up incrementally as you wander around your flat). On the other, it means that backtracking is inevitable, frequent and, on occasion, pretty damn tedious.

Practically, you move from your "home, sour home" to the bathroom where the portal (which slowly widens as the game progresses) takes you to various places (many of them in *Silent Hill*). As you complete objectives the portal will shift in size and destination. When you've arrived at your location you will notice other portals scattered about the areas you explore. They will all lead straight back to your apartment, where you wake up in bed as if from a bad dream.

It's an odd system, to be sure, but it's one that adds to the genuine feeling of dreamy creepiness that pervades this title. Additionally, the apartment sequences are seen from a first-person perspective, which does take some getting used to. You can stare balefully out of your window, peephole and spy-hole (into your next door neighbour Eileen's) and recharge, but the whole caper

NOT THE MONSTER MASH BUT...

Everyone who played *Silent Hill 3* had many good things to say about the variety of monsters. It was great. They were huge, twitchy lumbering things and bulk fun to bludgeon to death. *SH4* doesn't have nearly the variety of big beasts but you do get more intelligent foes that follow you around like bad smells unless pinned with a *Sword Of Obedience*. Be careful though, these new enemies don't even need to touch you. Their evil minds will simply suck your life away. Be afraid, be very afraid...



Impressively, almost everything can be destroyed

BETTER THAN

RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK

WORSE THAN

SILENT HILL 2

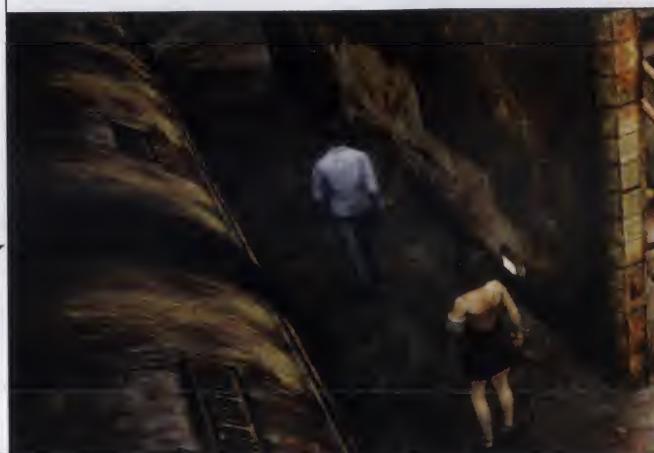
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

A sense of a nightmarish, alternate dimension where anything is possible

What they need to fix

One save point? Backtracking isn't scary – it's just annoying!





feels very claustrophobic. Which was probably the point. However, once the apartment is left it's business as usual. For those unfamiliar with the series, that means a third-person perspective, strange and eerie environments and lots of exploring. Basically *Resident Evil*-style gaming but with less firepower.

SO WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Unlike *Silent Hill 3*, which was immediately accessible and relatively quick in getting to the meat of the story, *SH4* is a slow burn. For that reason newcomers to the series will probably want to have a gander at more first-time friendly games like *Silent Hill 2* or *3*. There is an upside to this slow build though – *SH4* probably has the best and most logical plot of any of the series, despite also being one of the wierdest (which is saying something). Rather than have a monster just appear because it's been 10 minutes since you fought the last one, each of your major enemies has something to do with the story and is genuinely eerie. Admittedly, there are few beasts as cool-looking as the bloated fat monsters of *Silent Hill 3*, but this time around there are floating corpses that can actually hurt you psychically, and unless they're put down with a sword and impaled like a bug on a pin, they'll chase you throughout the entire game!

Certain artefacts and medallions can be found to ward off this mind terrorism, but you're being attacked on two fronts. Back at the homestead, babies' faces peer through the wall shrieking, blood shoots out of the dryer and a loud booming voice tells you "I'm watching you... I'm always watching you!" These random demonic incursions must be dealt with otherwise you won't be able to walk two feet through the house without screaming as your brain implodes. This added element of a ticking clock really gives *Silent Hill 4* a sense of growing dread, something that's been lacking in a lot of recent survival-horror outings.

Graphically, the game is simply staggering. Not miles ahead of *Silent Hill 3*, but awesome to behold nonetheless. The strange, static-filled sequences that herald the arrival of a new enemy are brilliant in their dark poetry and some of the many (quite graphic) death scenes will manage to chill even a veteran horror fan. Sound also plays a big role in this as you'll need to listen carefully to what characters say and the sounds from the distance if you want to finish your quest in one piece. Not to mention the soundtrack with its Nine Inch Nails-esque jangly guitar and creepy lullaby songs.

Gameplay-wise *Silent Hill 4* suffers from the same problems that have plagued the whole series (awkward controls, stilted combat) but these are factors that almost add to the tension. Basically you either like them

or you don't. One added element to the melee attack is a charge bar that builds up slowly and can launch a powerful attack if timed correctly. It's not a huge addition but good on Konami for tweaking the system slightly. The element of the apartment-as-hub does grate on occasion but it's nowhere near as tricky as it sounds, and even adds to some of the puzzles later in the game.

So overall, *Silent Hill 4* is a great game. Solid to play, longer than the last entry and genuinely intriguing. Anyone with even a passing interest in horror needs to have a look, and for *Silent Hill* fans it's a given, but you might want to set aside an entire weekend so you can sample the more subtle elements of this layered title.

Replete with the expected multiple endings and unlockable treats, *Silent Hill 4* doesn't reinvent itself but does toy with some new and compelling ideas. This is an essential play for the curious and fans of the genre. And the brave.  **Anthony O'Connor**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Silent Hill makes soul-scraping terror look beautiful
Sound	09	This is the soundtrack of the damned
Gameplay	08	The usual survival-horror problems are evident
Lifespan	08	Long, tricky, multiple endings and unlockables

Silent Hill 4: The Room is truly creepy and manages to combine skull-splitting combat with subtle chills.

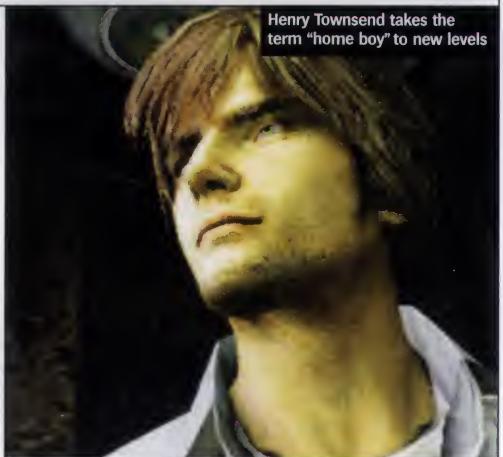
08

WELCOME TO ROOM 302... DOOMED HUMAN SCUM!

FOR LEASE: Apartment 302. Close access to shops and Silent Hill is just around the corner. PROS: Has the only save point in the entire game and will recharge your health. Also you can store spare weapons and charms. CONS: Can only be seen through awkward first-person perspective and will frequently be attacked by demonic ghosts. Oh, additionally you can't actually leave except via a Hell dimension. Having said that, the view's quite good and the rent's cheap!



Henry Townsend takes the term "home boy" to new levels





BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

It's like being in Star Wars! When it was good!

SHOOTER

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

LucasArts reveals the Death Star of massively multiplayer war games

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC STUDIOS
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-16 ONLINE)
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

Pandemic was originally a PC games developer that created titles like Dark Reign 2 and Battlezone II. The company is also one of the few companies with a development studio in Australia, nestled lovingly in the inner city of Brisbane.

A couple of years ago, EA had a massive hit with the PC title, *Battlefield 1942*. Set in World War II (duh!), it featured large scale combat in massive roving environments, both on foot and in a variety of vehicles. *Star Wars: Battlefront* takes that winning formula and sprinkles it with a little bit of George Lucas magic.

The forces in battle against each other are straight out of the movies. If you're playing in the Clone Wars era, it's the Republic versus the Separatist Faction (truckloads of droids). During the Galactic War period, it's the Rebels up against the Empire. On most battlefields there will be a third side thrown into the equation, like the Gungans, the Ewoks or the Tusken Raiders. This often leads to a three way tug-of-war for territory, and makes for frantic fighting right down to the wire.

Each side has four standard classes: Soldier, Sniper, Heavy Weapons and Support, as well as one or two specialist units. Some of the more exotic classes include Wookie commandos, Boba Fett-esque Jetpack troops and those assault droids from the Phantom Menace that can roll up into a ball for quick transport. If that's not enough, you can jump into a selection of 15 authentic vehicles like TIE Fighters, AT-STs, Snowspeeders and even ride Tauntauns. Just like in the movies, in the thick of battle you'll have blaster bolts flying past your ears. The great beauty of this is that if you're taking fire, you'll always know where it's coming from and will usually get some chance to duck for cover and retaliate.

The wars rage on 15 battlefields over 10 environments including the rolling fields of Naboo, the harsh deserts of Tatooine and the pristine Cloud City high above Bespin. The levels give you a good variety of close quarters combat, open areas and mixed cover to ensure that each character class has a useful application.

The multiplayer game has a formidable set of options, allowing you to choose between two-player split-screen, four-player LAN or 16 players via online Network Gaming.

If you come up a few Stormtroopers short for a galactic games sesh, you can always make up numbers with computer-controlled players.

If there's one thing you can say about LucasArts, it's that they always get the sound right, whether it's the distinctive howl of an X-Wing's ion engines, the scream of blaster fire or the symphonic strains of John Williams' score. The only way you would feel more part of a *Star Wars* movie would be if you Jedi Mind Tricked Natalie Portman into making out with you.

Pandemic went all out on the controls, and they're as tight, responsive and customisable as you get, though the optional auto-aim is rather overdone, to the point where it will even track to follow your enemies. While most FPS veterans will find it annoying, it's a good way for novice gamers to get into the game and have an impact straight away. If it becomes a concern, for multiplayer games you can even disable auto-aim at a server level so everyone is forced onto a level playing field.

If you've even got the slightest bit of fondness for *Star Wars*, you'll find yourself lost in the wonder and nostalgia that *Battlefront* provides. With the considerable array of multiplayer options, *SW:B* looks like the next online sensation for PS2. **– Nick O'Shea**



ALL YOUR BASE ARE BELONG TO US

One of the deeper single-player modes is Galactic Conquest, which pits two sides against each other in a battle for planetary control. Two successive victories on a planet means that you take control, and will be granted access to the planet's unique technologies to bolster your army's strength in

future battles. Some of the bonuses available include advanced training to turn your troops into crack-shots, Bacta serum, which allows your soldiers to automatically regenerate their health, and even a Lightsaber-twirling Jedi hero to fight alongside your warriors.



BETTER THAN

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4:
XTREME LEGENDS

WORSE THAN

HAVING JEDI POWERS

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The feeling of being in the thick of a *Star Wars* battle, many different classes

What they need to fix

My deaf Hungarian mate with a lisp could do a better Yoda impression

OFFICIAL VERDICT

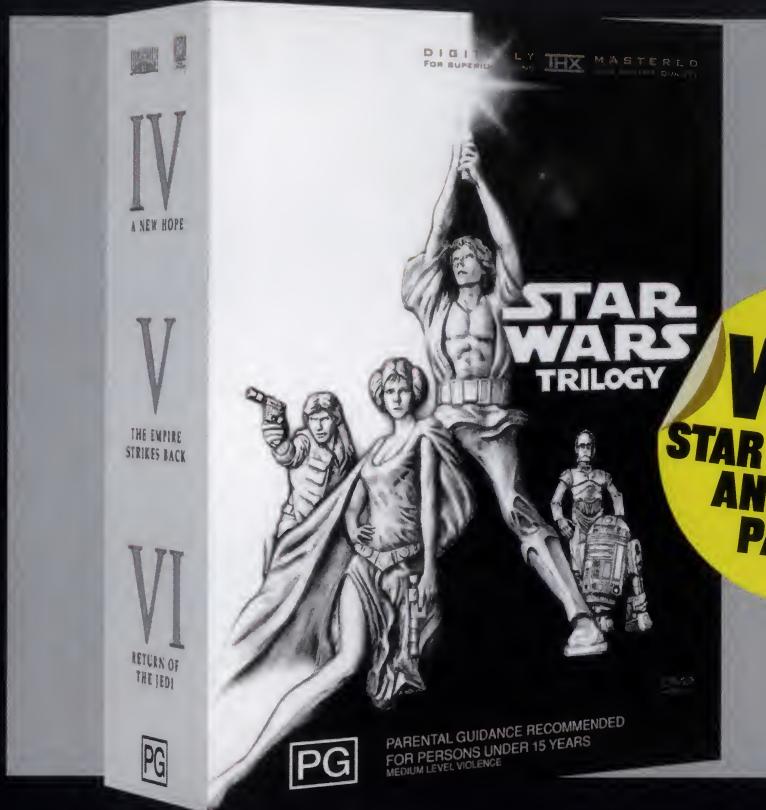
Graphics	08	Clean and crisp likenesses of Star Wars battles
Sound	09	Sounds like an orchestra armed with laser rifles
Gameplay	08	Intense combat by yourself, with mates or online
Lifespan	08	Plenty of options for long-lasting fun

We sense that the Force is strong with this one. Add it to your collection you should!

08

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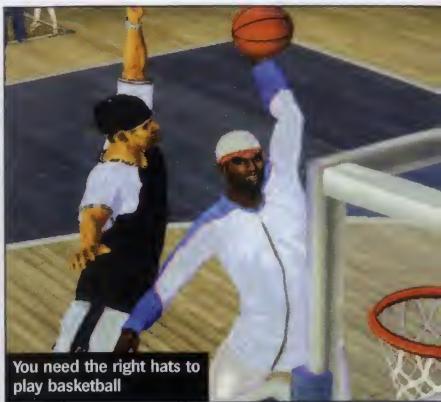
STAR WARS FANS will be over the moon of Endor with this awesome Star Wars gear. Thanks to Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment and Electronic Arts we've got 20 Star Wars Trilogy DVD boxsets and 10 Star Wars *Battlefront* games to give away. The first ten winners will get a DVD boxset and game, and the following 10 will get DVD boxsets. To enter all you have to do is write in and tell us why you deserve to win in 15 words or less. The classic sci-fi trilogy comes to DVD with newly remastered versions of the films and over 10 hours of bonus material, and the *Star Wars Battlefront* game lets up to 16 players battle it out in famous conflicts from all six Star Wars movies! What are you waiting for? Enter now!



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HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Star Wars Giveaway" in the subject line or send envelopes via snail mail to: OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition. Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 3 November, 2004. This comp is also open to NZ residents.



**X DETAILS**

DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT

DEVELOPER: MIDWAY

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-2

OUT: OCTOBER

WEBSITE:

WWW.NBABALLERS.COM

60HZ MODE: YES

WIDESCREEN: YES

SURROUND SOUND: YES

ONLINE: YES

X BACK STORY

Mark Turnell, one of the main men behind the arcade basketball smash of the early '90s, NBA Jam, is in charge of NBA Ballers. Following the success of the various NBA Jam games, Turnell and Midway went on to produce the equally over-the-top NFL Blitz & NHL Hitz games.

SHOW ME THE BLING BLING

In rags to riches style, the more moves you perform, the more points you get. The more points you get, the more money you get. With this money you can purchase chains, caps, cribs, tops, glasses and even trucks. With your character you can customize his nose, chin and lips into whatever size and shape you want. You can even have cool sideburns like our superfly sports guy Mike Gresser, but doing this could result in attracting thousands of women. You have been warned.

**BASKETBALL**

NBA BALLERS

Have you got the skillz to pay the billz?

T

he NBA is as much of a lifestyle as it is a sport. Wearing Armani suits, showing off your ultra-large chains and having a dope mansion, that's what it's all about. NBA

Ballers is one of the first NBA games to incorporate this trivial yet realistic facet. Sure there's been NBA Jam but that was mainly about style on the court, not off it. So get your ball and dimes, it's NBA Ballin' time.

Graphically NBA Ballers looks as classy as Michael Jordan's shoes. The player faces make NBA Live look like it was trying out for the summer leagues. Fluid, crisp animations make plays like Vince Carter's elbow dunk seem eerily real. Backgrounds are varied and detailed with big screen TVs and fans in the crowd hollering and cheering. Special moves (called 'Act Like A Fool') appear in a slow-motion Matrix-style with some nice motion blur effects. Accessories on players such as jewellery (see "Show me the money") are a nice touch and add some necessary charisma. Even during loading times there is a shot of an NBA player in a suit. Graphically, NBA Ballers belongs in the major league.

NBA Ballers is a deep game and may surprise b-ball fans out there. While the game has a glitz atmosphere, there are more than enough tactics for the wannabe coach to utilise. Ballers is a one-on-one game played on half a court - which is a rarity in itself. Thankfully the action isn't biased towards the offence, as it is in other arcade basketball games. Mind you, there is still an impressive selection of offensive moves.

When using the turbo button with various button combinations, you will be bouncing the ball off your opponent's head, dribbling the ball between his legs and spinning the ball on your finger, Harlem Globetrotters-style. String together combos of moves and your house meter will rise. When the house meter becomes full, executing a special move will win the game regardless of the current score. On defence you can counter special moves by pressing the **X** button and draw charges. Massive blocked shots will also have you hollering "In your face!" in no time. You can even throw your opponent down as well.

NBA Ballers is a fast-thinking game with surprisingly depth, and a very refreshing take on basketball, which sometimes comes across a little dull in videogame form. NBA posse wannabes will fall in love with showing off while pulling off an alley-oop dunk after bouncing the ball off some punk's head. B-ball fans, buy this game and show off... with style. **► Michael Gresser**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Fluid animations with impressive facial textures
Sound	07	Appropriate but not awe-inspiring
Gameplay	09	An amazing amount of moves, combos and strategy
Lifespan	08	More clothes and accessories than your momma

Better than NBA Jam on the court and much more stylish off it! Who needs the other eight players anyway?

08

BETTER THAN

NBA JAM

WORSE THAN

BEATING THE SYDNEY KINGS

LAB TEST**What they nailed this time**

The great-looking player faces and smart special moves

What they need to fix

Some more game modes, such as a slam dunk competition



fun, anyone?
PlayStation®2

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It's short but very sweet – the action pumps you along swiftly

VIEWTIFUL JOE

Capcom turns the PS2 viewtiful

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PRICE: \$59.95

PLAYERS: 1

OUT: OCTOBER

WEBSITE:

WWW.CAPCOM.COM/V-JOE

60HZ MODE: NO

WIDESCREEN: NO

SURROUND SOUND: NO

ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Some time ago, Capcom announced a quintet of all-new titles that were only bound for Nintendo's home console. After a considerable wait, the pick of the bunch is no longer exclusive and now PS2 owners can get into Capcom product director Hideki Kamiya's brainchild.



apcom has a track record of producing some top-quality entertainment. Titles like *Street Fighter II*, *Resident Evil*, *Onimusha* and *Devil May Cry* have become

paradigms that the industry has to measure up to, and have etched a mark in the hearts of gamers forever. Well, make room for one more, because *Viewtiful Joe* is finally here. After having to wait a year after those dungaree-wearing, moustachioed Gamecube owners got their white-gloved hands on the game, PS2 gamers finally get a chance to see what the fuss is all about.

Joe is just your average... um... dude, other than the fact that he enjoys a good movie more than most. One afternoon while enjoying a Captain Blue flick with his amorous girlfriend Sylvia, something unusual happens – and not just "that's odd" unusual, but that real "bugger me, run for your life" unusual. As if by magic, the movie villain reaches through the silver screen and snatches Joe's ladylove away and vanishes into Movieland. Bamboozled by the awesome special effects, Joe is similarly snaffled into the film by Captain Blue, and suddenly becomes our unwitting, yet enthusiastic, protagonist out to save the damsel in distress.

Under the guidance of his mentor Captain Blue, Joe quickly learns the powers of Viewtiful Effects – the ability to control the film. Using VFX, Joe can speed up, slow down or zoom in on the action, radically changing the properties of his basic attacks. Add these abilities to a range of special moves you can purchase at the shop, and you've got plenty of ways to kick arse. Still, VFX is about more than just punishing the baddies. Quite often Joe is required to use VFX's influence on his environment to progress. This adds a welcome cerebral element to what would have been an otherwise instinctive slugfest.

The striking graphical style employed is undoubtedly the first thing you'll notice. Like Ubisoft's *XIII*, Capcom has opted for a cell-shaded comical approach and for a full-on, over-the-top adventure like this, it works a treat. Utilising VFX loses most of the background in a blur, and greatly exaggerates effects. Sudden explosions are transformed into slowly blossoming roses of flame. Gunfire that is normally only discernable by the muzzle flash can be seen as distinctly separate projectiles under VFX, each trailing visible compression waves. The animation meets the similarly lofty standards set by the visuals, with Joe's choreography looking like it's been pulled out of a Jackie Chan film.

Viewtiful Joe plays a lot like an old-school scrolling beat-'em-up (think *Dragon Ninja*) with lots of 2D brawling, albeit with a lot more polish and flair. Most of the dozen or so enemies you encounter do get pretty close to punching bags once you've worked out their

Comic book fans will relish in the superb visuals



attack patterns, but the challenge remains in stringing together long combos to earn as many all-important Viewtifuls (coins for use at the shop) as soon as you can. The bosses are a bit the same, but still require some frantic controller work to get past.

With only seven levels, once you get the hang of *Viewtiful Joe*, you can breeze through the game in swift fashion. Still, if you've got the skills and persistence to play through the game a few times, there are added difficulty levels and hidden characters to unlock that spice things up a bit. *Viewtiful Joe* is a great synthesis of classic side-scrolling platform gameplay with modern-day technology and visuals. Though it can feel a little simple and repetitive, when it's executed this stylishly, it's forgivable. At the attractive price tag of 60 bucks, it's well worth the price of admission. **– Nick O'Shea**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics 08 Gorgeous cartoon visuals with spectacular effects

Sound 07 Funky tunes punctuated by explosions & Joe's quips

Gameplay 08 The best that old and new have to offer

Lifespan 07 Over fairly soon, but unlockables if you stick with it

Old-school gaming meets new-school technology in a super-stylish world.
This one's a real viewtiful!

08

DEVIL MAY SPEEDO

The new addition for the PS2 version of *Viewtiful Joe* is the inclusion of *Devil May Cry*'s gun-toting hero, Dante. Armed with his mighty broadsword Alastor and twin pistols Ebony and Ivory, Dante dispenses his own brand of demon hunter justice on Movieland. Funnily enough, as a smack-talking wiseguy with superhuman powers, he doesn't really seem out of place at all. Be very careful though – let Dante's VFX meter drop too low and he'll be reduced to sauntering around in a pair of black budgie smugglers. The horror... the horror...!



BETTER THAN

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE

WORSE THAN

SHINOBI

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Sweet VFX powers, polished animation and great visual design

What they need to fix

Most enemies are a bit weak and a few more levels wouldn't hurt

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THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

Welcome to the jungle... mind all the dead bodies

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: EIDOS
DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA GAMES
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.EIDOS.CO.UK
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Now that WWII has been pretty much mined for game material it looks like the Vietnam War is the latest conflict du jour. But will that infamous land war in Asia be as rich as the battle for European freedom? Eidos Interactive certainly hopes so.



You're walking through the steamy Vietnamese Jungle, sweaty hands gripped around your M-14 rifle. You're watching the ground for booby traps or mines and always waiting to hear the whine of a sniper's bullet. Suddenly you come upon your objective: A ruined fort. It's a haven of Vietcong and it looks like they've been expecting you. Severed GI heads on pikes line the outside of the fort's large wooden door like macabre flowers. Daubed in blood, on the stone walls, are the words: "Welcome to Hell". You barely have enough time to register the scene before the gunfire starts...

The above describes an actual level from *Shellshock: Nam '67*, one of a growing series of games set during the Vietnam War. What sets it apart from the pack is the sense of gritty realism and vague morality that proved such strong thematic material for movies like *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*.

You start off playing as one of three nameless characters, fresh to 'Nam and ready for action in 1967 – right when things were at their messiest. Initially you're just a lowly grunt but as the missions progress you can prove yourself worthy of being an elite member of Special Forces.

The gameplay is pretty standard third-person shooter stuff, just like SOCOM: US Navy SEALs (but without the team commands) and the Conflict: Desert Storm games (but without the ability to change your character). Other than that it's pretty much a matter of slowly making your way through jungle or city settings, shooting the enemy and not getting your own head blown off. The last bit is literal, because if you get shot in the bonce it will explode like an overripe watermelon.

The action isn't all simple "run and gun", however – you can hold only one large weapon at a time so elements of strategy do apply. For instance, some missions you'll want the sniper rifle to pick off VC from a distance, whereas other, more action-oriented levels will require the use of the "Death Machine" (a shoulder-mounted gun of extreme destruction).

A nice touch is the fact that the missions don't just follow on from one another. You'll go out, perform your duties and, if you survive, return to an interactive base. While you're in the base you can re-arm, change weapons, buy performance-enhancing drugs and even spend some R&R with the local prostitutes.

Shellshock: Nam '67 is a game that's going to prove very divisive right from the outset. It's a gritty, gory, expletive-filled and frankly cruel war game that enables players to take part in all manner of grisly wartime

BETTER THAN

VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE

WORSE THAN

CONFLICT: VIETNAM

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The sequences where hordes of VC swamp your position. Frantic fun.

What they need to fix

The reliance on shocks and the limited number of missions. Multiplayer, too.

DRUGS AND HOOKERS AND BLOOD – OH MY!

Much has been made of the fact you can score drugs and sleep with prostitutes in *Shellshock*. The fact is, however, the drugs you can get (at least in the Australian version) are used simply for helping you snipe accurately, and the hooker option is nothing more than an animation of a hut a-rockin'. Far more shocking is the fact you can kill civilians and not be penalised in the slightest. Certainly games like *Manhunt* and *The Suffering* are nastier, but *Shellshock*'s based on real events that occurred not all that long ago.



Use your rockets wisely around trees



atrocities. Unlike previous war titles of note like *Medal of Honor*, *Shellshock* piles on the blood, sometimes to unnecessary extremes. Certainly we all know war is horrible but does every enemy you shoot really need to explode into spurting pieces?

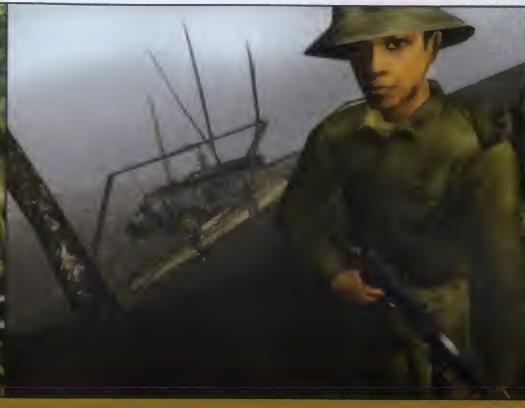
Having said that, *Shellshock* is a fun little title. The missions are quite long and challenging (thankfully with numerous checkpoints) and there's a genuine sense of suspense when you're crawling through the jungle. The graphics are suitably slick and the audio is very atmospheric. Unfortunately the game relies too heavily on shock tactics when another 10 or so levels would have improved this brief title a lot more than yet another animation of villagers being gunned down by overzealous American troops. – Anthony O'Connor

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Nice and gritty with loads of bloody effects
Sound	08	Neat jungle noises, explosions and music of the era
Gameplay	07	If you've played a shooter before, you've played this
Lifespan	06	Tough but rather short, with no real replay value

Violent, nasty and brimming with controversy, *Shellshock* certainly won't be to everyone's taste.





FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

VIETCONG: PURPLE HAZE

Vietcong? We'd swear "Purple Haze" was a Hendrix number...

It's a war game. It's first-person. You shoot people. If you're anywhere near your PS2 games at the moment there are probably already a small band of first-person war games staring you in the face. They're like chins – everyone's got at least one. "But wait," we're told, "this is a game set in Vietnam – not WWII. It's different" Is it?

The most obvious distinction between this and much of the bullet-torn market is that a game based on the Vietnam War opens up a number of moral issues. While shooting invading Nazis is seen as acceptable, some gamers may not enjoy the symbolism of playing as Uncle Sam's groping right hand as it mows down scores of Vietnamese on their own turf.

Presuming, however, that most gamers don't care what they shoot on-screen, the real issue is whether or not Vietcong is a great game. To be blunt, it's not. It's not bad – but it needs to be better.

Firstly, the nuances of the Vietnam War's jungle warfare – the real selling point – haven't been integrated into the game. There are no hidden tunnels or paths or consideration of civilian casualties. Vietcong's levels are much more straightforward. One level might have you tracking down missing soldiers, and another might have you destroying Vietcong bases and weapons caches, but they all play the same. You start off in the middle of nowhere, order your pointman to lead your team to avoid ambushes, and then you find, engage, and kill the

enemy. Eventually the mission ends, and that's it. This formula might have proven acceptable if your foe were the brilliant invisible guerrilla that the Vietcong were, but you almost always spot them first, and they're always as thick as drugged-up hookers. No grenades to flush you out, no group tactics. They just pop their heads out from cover and shoot at you 'til they cop a bullet between the eyes. We know they're not the U.S. of A, but we also know the Vietcong weren't so daft and unimaginative.

The second grievance is that the main singleplayer campaign is too easy. Apart from having a pointman that detects every trap, you usually have a medic in your squad who can heal you up in a nanosecond. Considering you'll be working with a team of grunts who aren't shy when it comes to firing off lead, you can understand why the odds are stacked in your favour.

Vietcong is reasonably robust (yet generic), complete with realistic weapons, good presentation, and a handful of solid levels. It's rarely painful or annoying, and some thought has been put into the PS2 conversion. But games don't just compete with each other; they also compete with a myriad of other leisure activities. You're not going to sacrifice watching a great TV show or film, heading to the pub or anything else remotely enjoyable to play something so mediocre. It's got to be great and Vietcong ain't. **James Ellis**

LIGHTNING WAR

If you want to jump straight into a game then the Quick Fight option is for you. Select a level, choose your weapons, decide if you need backup, then jump into the fray. This mode mainly allows you to go through levels you've already played, but it also allows you to switch sides and play as the Vietcong taking on the Americans – no doubt this'll be a favourite option in Iraq this Christmas.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	The jungle looks okay, but there's too much fog
Sound	05	Full of expletives, gun sounds, and hippie music twang
Gameplay	05	It's functional, but rough and far from addictive
Lifespan	05	Not fun enough to ensure you replay the missions

It's technically passable, but a tad on the boring side. Do you want that in a videogame? We didn't think so.

06

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: COYOTE
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.VIETCONG-GAME.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO



BETTER THAN

ACTUALLY BEING THERE

WORSE THAN

SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The presentation and voice-over suit the mood

What they need to fix

The pacing, level design and infantile difficulty are problems

X BACK STORY

The PC version of Vietcong was released half way through last year and soon after came the expansion pack, Fist Alpha, featuring additional missions and weapons. This PS2 version is an amalgamation of both PC releases.



American soldiers: not necessarily fat like their countrymen



BOXING SIM

ROCKY LEGENDS

Can the Italian Stallion KO EA's challenger, *Fight Night*?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: VENOM GAMES
PRICE: \$79.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.UBISOFT.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The original *Rocky* movie came out in 1976 and was such a classic that four more followed, then Activision's first boxing sim based on the series arrived last year. This sequel moves away from the movies to follow the major characters in all-new boxing adventures.



ast year Activision landed a surprise knockout punch on the gaming scene with the original *Rocky*. But after the release of EA's *Fight Night 2004*, OPS2 started thinking that the Italian Stallion's reign as the PS2 boxing champ was coming to an end faster than Sylvester Stallone's film career. But we're happy to see Rocky's still got some fight left. Taking over from Activision, Ubisoft has laced up the gloves once again, trimming the body fat from the first game and building up a lot of gameplay muscle for the sequel so it can deliver a killer sim.

The main meat of the game can be found in the Career mode, where not only do you get to rearrange some faces with Rocky, but also with his buddies Apollo Creed, Ivan Drago and Clubber Lang. Each character has different paths that they take to reach the ultimate goal of World Champion. Apollo starts off in the final of an amateur boxing tournament where he must win in order to enter the professional rankings. Ivan begins his journey fighting in the Russian army and Clubber's first match takes place in the slammer with a fellow inmate who asked him to pick up the soap. After these opening battles it's all about climbing the ladder to take on the champ. In between fights you'll be hitting the gym with training regimes consisting of mini-games that require you to either give your \otimes button a pounding or hit it at the appropriate time like you would in a rhythm game. The better you do in training, the more points you'll receive to build up your attributes, which you'll need if you want to land a punch on the champ.

Little has changed with Rocky's boxing style. You'll still need to hit the right combination of buttons in order to pull out the powerful combos and if you do find yourself flat on your back then you'll need to mash the

PICKING UP CHICKS

Sure, you can bench press, hit the punching bag or skip rope like a sissy, but trainers around the world know that the real test of skill is found in chasing chicks. While lines like "If I said you had a nice body would you hold it against me" won't work here, your Dual Shock controller will help you score. All you'll need to do is guide your fighter around the pen and when you've got the chick cornered, pick her up with the \otimes button. Catching the hen will give you attribute points that will help you become a better fighter.



\otimes button to get back into the fight. The boxers do get around a little slower than they used to, but they are a lot more fluid with their moves, clearly embracing the 'float like a butterfly, sting like a bee' philosophy.

The only major change to the fighting is the inclusion of a Super Special Move, similar to those found in the *Street Fighter* games. Landing a lot of punches will build up a turbo meter which, once full, will give you about 10 seconds to pull off the combo of all combos, leaving your opponent wondering if they should head towards the light at the end of the tunnel.

Unfortunately, at the final weigh-in *Rocky Legends* comes up a little light. While it's still one of the greatest boxing sims around, it just doesn't pack quite as much punch as EA's *Fight Night* does. Essentially *Rocky Legends* is more like an expansion pack than a full game, as the sequel really only offers a few new modes bolted onto the same game we played last year. If you've already got *Rocky* in your collection then you should think about spending your money elsewhere, but if you've never had the opportunity to play the original, or you're just a die-hard *Rocky* fan then you won't regret stepping into the ring with *Rocky Legends*. **Paul Frew**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Much prettier than the original
Sound	05	Bad, bad impersonations
Gameplay	09	Simple, fun button-mashing boxing
Lifespan	09	Plenty to unlock and four different career paths

Rocky Legends is a great boxing sim let down only by a lack of innovation. Get it if you don't already have *Rocky*.



Apollo's huge afro and facial hair make him look superfly

BETTER THAN

ROCKY

WORSE THAN

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Career mode. Rocky's cool but no one messes with Clubber Lang

What they need to fix

We wanted more new stuff



fun, anyone?
PlayStation®2



ACTION RPG

THE BARD'S TALE

The things we do for lust!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: INXILE ENT
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.INXILE-ENTERTAINMENT.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The character of the Bard first cropped up in an RPG on the Apple II system back in the mid-'80s, as well as jumping over to appear in a few games for the Commodore 64. As for developer InXile, this is its pioneer game – and it's damn good for a first effort.

Imagine if the fate of the world rested on the shoulders of some pommy punk-sounding wannabe-rocker bastard who gave everyone lip and constantly hunted tottie. It'd hardly be optimum, would it? But it sums up the goings on in InXile's new top-down action RPG, *The Bard's Tale*, where you take control of a wandering medieval muse who's the very definition of the reluctant I'm-in-it-for-the-money-and-sex hero. And yes, he's damn funny.

The story itself is not so important – a fact with which the Bard agrees. Basically, a magical princess who's being held captive by some nasty warlords selects our young womaniser as her hero in shining armour. If he can extinguish the flames of three enchanted towers scattered through the land, he'll save the princess, who'll in turn give him more treasure and sex ("thrice daily," she claims) than any mortal could cope with. What more incentive could any bloke want?

To get your hands on the, erm, booty you have to hack through a Herculean quest, controlling the dry-mouthed Bard's explorations of towns, humorous discussions with NPCs (that's non-playable characters to

game isn't paced well. It takes you a while to be able to conjure up more than two minions, and a lot of levels swarm you with too many enemies. Even when you finally get a mob together and can take on larger groups, you'll find yourself playing on – not because the game's fun, but because you've invested so much time into it that you're curious to know what happens next. What new weapon will you find? What minion will you discover next? It's hypnotic addiction along the lines of "Arrrr, alright – I'll just hack my way through another map to see what's in the next treasure chest," as opposed to "Wahoo, I've got to have another melee fight." Can you tolerate the former?

Even if you can't, *The Bard's Tale* manages to raise its head higher than its competitors in other ways. The visuals (particularly the Bard's character model) are absolutely first class, and the dialogue, sound effects, animation and presentation all demand major respect. Sure, we've had a whinge about a few things, but don't let that deter you from the fact that *The Bard's Tale* is a hilarious adventure packed with sarcastic asides, action, and lots of cleavage-ogling charm. **James Ellis**

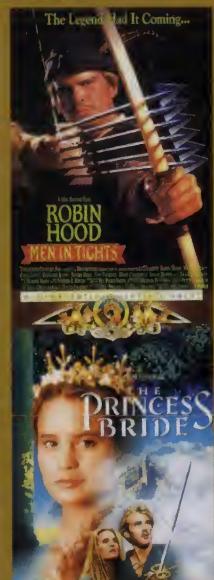
"He'll save the princess who'll in turn give him more sex than any mortal could cope with"

the layperson), the undertaking of main and side quests, and button-mauling combat. However, there's only one attack button, so don't expect *Return of the King*-styled arcade thrills. What you get instead is the ability to play magical tunes that summon mystical creatures and warriors to fight by your side. Unfortunately, you can't summon an army of flatulent Homer-esque barge asses to run over the top of the enemy, eat their food, steal their TV Weeks, and save the day straight away. Nope, you start out with a piss-poor set of strings that can only summon one sidekick, and as the game progresses, you discover superior instruments until you can eventually summon a whole whoop-ass gang to help you earn years of steamy bedroom romping.

The Bard's Tale is different and original, brandishing more life than your average RPG (Really Pointless Game), but does it warrant every man, woman, and child parting with a cool hundred dollar bill? Not really. For a start, the

THE BARD IN TIGHTS

Actor Cary Elwes is the man responsible for bringing The Bard's cockney voice to life, and he's done a bloody brilliant job. Before this, our man Elwes was seen in the final season of *The X-Files*, as well as the lead in numerous films, including *The Princess Bride* and *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*. Look for him in the upcoming films *Solo* and *Neo Ned*.



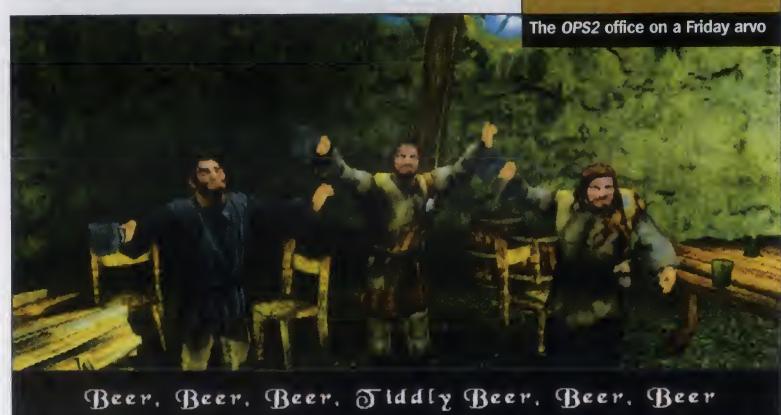
OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Great lighting and characters. But why top-down?
Sound	09	Verbal jousts between the Bard and narrator are stellar
Gameplay	07	Could've been more enjoyable, but better than most
Lifespan	07	It's not FFX-sized, but it's of reasonable length

An RPG about booze, babes, and bucks: it's hilarious! Could still have trouble converting non-RPG fans...

07

The OPS2 office on a Friday arvo



BETTER THAN

BALDR'S GATE:
DARK ALLIANCE II

WORSE THAN

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The Bard makes Han Solo look like Mother Theresa

What they need to fix

Spice up the combat, and rethink the structure and pace



CRISIS ZONE

TM

Some go to health farms to chill out,

Others pick up a couple of G-con™2s

fun,
anyone?
PlayStation.2

Game available
with G-con™2 gun
or standalone.

namco

M15+
CONTENT RATED



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Has the developer mistaken this level for *Total Recall*?

THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

TERMINATOR 3: THE REDEMPTION

Your enjoyment has been targeted for termination

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: PARADIGM
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.ATARI.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

There have been many Terminator games in the past. The story of cyborg assassins sent through time by the genocidal computer program is a compelling one, and has always meant box office smashes and home console cash-ins.

BETTER THAN

T3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

WORSE THAN

SPIDER-MAN 2

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Playing as the invulnerable Terminator, and the cool stunts he does

What they need to fix

Horrendous loading times, positioning of restart points

A

robot sent back in time to destroy a robot sent back in time to destroy the future. As confusing as it sounds, it's a great premise for a game – two powerful titans

battling it out with the fate of the world at stake. After their last hurrah with *Mission Impossible: Operation Surma*, Paradigm Entertainment looks to deliver the Terminator experience to PS2.

The story of *Terminator 3: The Redemption* roughly follows last year's T3 film, only with a few variations. The main exception is that T3:TR starts before the narrative of the movie, and explains how Arnie's T-800 came to be fighting alongside the humans in the battle against the machines. After a half-arsed reprogramming by the resistance fighters, the T-800 is sent into the thick of battle against waves of robots and hunter-killer drones, with the ultimate aim of penetrating the Skynet defences and travelling back in time to save John Connor from termination at the hands of the lethal, and hot, new T-X cyborg.

To keep with the cinematic feel, Paradigm has created heaps of CG cut-scenes to help develop the story and, for the most part, they're excellent in terms of production and execution. The biggest mistake though, was using CG sequences alternately with footage directly from the T3 movie. It just makes for a disjointed feel, as the cut-scenes don't have any sense of continuity, and what begins to feel like a solid plot soon has more holes than a colander full of Swiss cheese.

Essentially, T3:TR is a mish-mash of many different gameplay styles. When Arnie's on foot, the game switches to third-person shooter action. As well as being able to wield dual weapons for serious firepower, he can also focus using the trademark Terminator infra-vision and engage in melee attacks. There's even a combo system for the close combat, but it can be pretty tricky to get the cooler attacks out. As Arnie wipes out his enemies, he'll occasionally quip some of his classic one-liners, voiced by a particularly cheesy impressionist.

Probably the best sequences are when Arnie is mounted on the back of resistance vehicles, hurtling through the Skynet forces. Not only is it pretty intense, but it reminds you a lot of the original chase sequences in *Terminator*. The T-800's combat capabilities can also be upgraded between levels using Terrabytes, which are

earned by destroying cyborgs. This gives you some sense of reward for your efforts.

Probably the worst thing about T3:TR is that it's obvious that for the most part, levels feel as though they were slapped together without too much effort going into them. This is especially obvious when progressing becomes more of a case of trial-and-error. Until you find all the hidden health packages and secret shortcuts, you'll often find yourself spending more time waiting for the game to restart the level than you do in the thick of it. The absence of difficulty levels means that new players are alienated, and veteran Terminators have no challenge to motivate them to play through again.

All told, maybe it should have been called *Terminator 3: The Damnation*, though there is some fun to be had. T3:TR is probably best enjoyed when rented with the T3 movie from your local, so you can compare and contrast the changes with the movie storyline and have a bit of a laugh with your mates while playing. **– Nick O'Shea**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics 07 Sparse environments, but nicely detailed characters

Sound 07 Competent soundtrack and Arnold impressions

Gameplay 06 Nothing too special, but a few good ideas

Lifespan 04 Unlike the T-800, this won't go the distance

Hasta la vista... *Terminator* game franchise. Bwahhaha!

05

CYBERNETIC LINK

If you've got a mate on the couch with you, T3:TR does feature a co-op game mode. This lets you play through three levels in which you play two cyborgs dangling out of a resistance helicopter while the pilot buzzes battalions of Skynet troops. Ultimately, it doesn't really capture the movie feel like the rest of the game, and may as well be any other on-rails shooter you care to name. On the plus-side, at least you don't have to split the screen in half to play.





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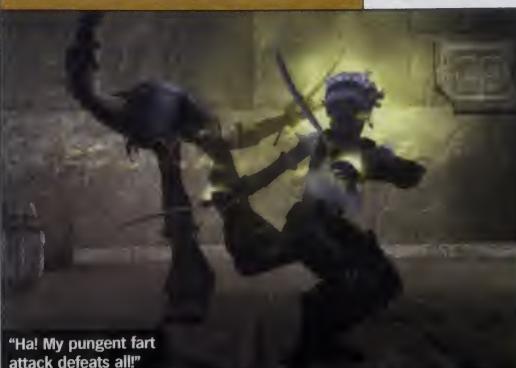


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"By the power of Greyskull!"



No, that's not a Jedi Knight...

BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

WELL, LEVEL ME

Before you make any assumptions about the levelling system within the game, know that it has been designed to be as simplistic or as complicated as you like. If you want to level up all your characters' statistics manually, you can do so. But there's also a feature which allows you to auto-level, meaning that, with the press of a button, it's all sorted for you, and you can concentrate on other things. For those of you who prefer a more middle path, it's possible to do a bit of both, so you can customise the way you level up to however you like it best. Very nicely done!



ACTION ADVENTURE

DEMON STONE

Caught between a rock and a hard place

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: STORMFRONT STUDIOS
PRICE: \$99.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.ATARI.COM/DEMONSTONE
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Stormfront Studios is perhaps best-known for its recent work on the Lord of the Rings title The Two Towers. However, the studio has been around for a good 14 years, and has masterminded such games as Neverwinter Nights and NASCAR 2000.

BETTER THAN

LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
WORSE THAN

LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The gameplay variety between the three playable characters

What they need to fix

Multiplayer! Seriously, there aren't enough games out there that do co-op



thief, a warrior and a wizard. Yup. We've all been there. Many times. Warring orcs? Pfft. Done that. And don't even start on the ancient evil that's threatening the entire realm – we bought the souvenir snow globe years ago. So, Demon Stone. A thief, a warrior, a wizard and an ancient evil. Check.

Despite the disheartening formulaic spread, though, Demon Stone is a little bit more than it initially seems. We've all seen the massively un-user-friendly, epic-collecting-system, let's-all-level-until-our-ears-bleed type of RPG. This is something a little bit different, combining RPG and action-adventure elements in a fast and furious match truly made in heaven.

The game kicks off, not in a humdrum tutorial or wandering around talking to people, but dead in the middle of a chaotic battle between warring orc factions. Furthermore, you are not the target of their attack. They will attack you if they see you, but their first priority seems to be each other. So you can run around as the warrior Rannek, swinging your sword madly, or you can take things a little bit slower to get a feel for how the system works, without having to slog your way through any sort of patronising tutorial.

Things get interesting when you run into a 'drow' called Zhal. Well, half-drow, half-wood-elf (basically she's a mix of two elven races, but that's not important). Enter thief. Take thief for a test-drive. Okay, she's not so much a thief as a rogue, but same difference. Her gameplay is slightly different to that of the warrior. You'll notice pretty sparkly patches of shadow, and when you move her into them, she can become invisible to enemies for a short space of time – making it easier for her to sneak up behind them and execute, silent-assassin-style.

So you get to run around for a bit as the game's token booty-call. And then you run into the wizard, Illius. Whose specialty is, of course, projectile magic – not to be

confused with projectile vomiting, which is a lot messier and doesn't get any orcs as dead as they should be.

You have the compulsory test run of the three characters for the first part of the game, but otherwise, you can mostly play whichever character you like. You will need to be relatively proficient in all three, since there will be times when you're forced to play one or another, but the fighting isn't very hard to master for any of them, so the game gives you the freedom to do whichever thang suits you best. Also, you can switch between characters on the fly, so if you find you're flagging a little with whoever you're usng, you can make a rapid switch to someone else in order to turn the tides.

Now, the game looks like an RPG, but it doesn't really play like one. There are basic puzzles, but most of the gameplay is kick-arse melee-style chaos. There is, however, a system of levelling-up your characters. Relax – it's been designed to be as user-friendly as possible, so even the most inexperienced of RPG gamers can navigate their posse to expert level with ease.

In the end, what you have here is a very nice package, with something to offer every level of gamer. The game really could have benefited from some kind of multiplayer experience, but as it stands, it's a top-quality solo adventure that can be pretty much whatever you want to make of it. **Michelle Starr**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Ever so pretty. Even the orcs look better than you do
Sound	09	Two words: Patrick Stewart. Kudos!
Gameplay	09	Precise and varied, like a Cornetto: no boring bits
Lifespan	07	Good for one or two playthroughs at most

A good, solid action-packed adventure game that can be pretty much anything the player wants it to be.





ACTION

UNDER THE SKIN

It came from Outer Space

According to the latest from Capcom, little green men are actually blue, and they're not interested in dissection – all they want is to make merry mischief and mayhem, and be on their way. Thank you very much.

Under The Skin is unlike anything you've ever played before. Cast in the role of a small blue alien, you're on a rite of passage and you have to prove yourself a man (or alien-man) by wreaking complete havoc through pranks.

Now, thanks to your spectacular arrival, the humans know that a close encounter could be just around the corner. Luckily, you have a scanner ray that allows you to take on the guise of various humans. You can't perform pranks until you do, so you have to quickly snap up a guise, and activate it in one of the beacons that are scattered around the various environments (which even include the *Resident Evil* series' Raccoon City).

You'll be able to pick up items that allow you to pull off practical jokes and evasion manoeuvres. Startle the

humans into dropping coins and make a getaway. Get attacked too many times by irate humans and your "skin" will start to disintegrate, leaving you first in your underwear, and then completely disguise-less.

The gameplay objectives are simple, but that doesn't mean you'll find the game a cakewalk. With the stages teeming with humans and other aliens, you'll find it increasingly difficult to keep up with. **Michelle Starr**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	It's Capcom. It's cel-shaded. It's good
Sound	07	Sp-DOING! Hwamki ibble-ibble-ibble!
Gameplay	07	It gets easier, but can be insanely difficult
Lifespan	06	Single-player is average, but multiplayer is solid

Capcom is royalty when it comes to utter wackiness, and it doesn't fail us here. Luckily, it also happens to be fun.

07

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:	THQ
DEVELOPER:	CAPCOM
PRICE:	\$79.95
PLAYERS:	1-2
OUT:	OCTOBER
WEBSITE:	WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/PANIC/ENGLISH.HTML
60HZ MODE:	NO
WIDESCREEN:	NO
SURROUND SOUND:	NO
ONLINE:	NO

Ooooh! Look at the pretty colours!



ACTION ADVENTURE

CRIMSON SEA 2

Can you defeat the deadly Alien menace of... "The Menace"?

Crimson Sea 2 is the kind of the game that falls into that wacky sub-genre: the "weird anime-style game". Generally this type of title is distinguished by cutesy characters with big eyes, strange aliens/monsters and loads of button-mashing combat, and *Crimson Sea 2* is no exception to the rule.

The threadbare plot focuses on Sho, who must save the Earth from an alien menace called, creatively enough, "The Menace". To aid him in his trials of combat Sho can command the use of an energy sword, various guns and the awesome power of Neo Psionics – which is pretty much just a fancy way of saying "casting powerful spells".

During the game Sho will hook up with the scantily clad Feanay, whom you can choose to play as or with (in two-player mode). The difference between the two characters is nominal, but it does add a little extra variety.

Other than that *Crimson Sea 2* is basically a run, gun and sword adventure with a plot that doesn't make a lot of sense (despite its simplicity), awkward character dialogue and some mildly entertaining scenes of combat. It's by no means a bad game, and the graphics and Neo Psionics effects look dandy, but we can't help but feel it's all been done before. **Anthony O'Connor**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Sweet models with effective if jerky animation
Sound	05	Okay sound effects and grating music
Gameplay	05	Fun but essentially mindless shoot or slash
Lifespan	07	Long enough to be a challenge for fans

Fairly generic sci-fi action adventure which, while it does nothing wrong, never really stands out from the pack.

06

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:	THQ
DEVELOPER:	KOEI
PRICE:	\$99.95
PLAYERS:	1-2
OUT:	NOW
WEBSITE:	WWW.KOEI.COM
60HZ MODE:	NO
WIDESCREEN:	NO
SURROUND SOUND:	YES
ONLINE:	NO



ACTION

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S WAR

The series that refuses to die takes to the micro battlefield once again

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
DEVELOPER: TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.TAKE2GAMES.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

T

hose who hoped that the death of 3DO meant the end of its Army Men games are going to be sorely disappointed. Take 2 saw potential sales, so we get lumped with yet another game starring the animated plastic men.

Luckily, Army Men: Sarge's War is good fun, for a change. The levels are very linear, and while being dragged through levels in a single direction might put some off, the steady stream of enemies to annihilate is ample compensation. Gunning them down is easy, despite the slow controls, and while there isn't much variety in what Sarge can do, the game's structured so that simply hammering the fire button is usually enough.

The action's set during a life-and-death war between plastic miniatures in an everyday backyard environment. Despite this, the levels look like every other war-based game, with the occasional giant shovel thrown in. Characters look like regular humans who have taken a

bath in paint before throwing themselves into the action, rather than tiny plastic soldiers.

Because the potentially interesting licence is wasted like this, Army Men: Sarge's War competes directly with all the other war games on the market. As such, the game will struggle to stand out, despite the generally entertaining action it offers. **▲ Matt Sainsbury**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Wastes the potential for playful, toy-based visuals
Sound	05	Bad voice acting, music. Decent effects, though
Gameplay	05	Very little substance, but the heavy action is still fun
Lifespan	05	The linear nature restricts its lasting appeal

It's not an 'A' grade game, but it's a competent and enjoyable shooter. Better than previous Army Men games.

06


You'd never believe that Dukes is Aussie made!

DRIVING ADVENTURE

DUKES OF HAZZARD: RETURN OF THE GENERAL LEE

We hazzard a guess you won't want to play this one...

X DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: RATBAG
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: OCTOBER
WEBSITE: WWW.UBI.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

Y

eehaw! Take *Grand Theft Auto III*, replace the sprawling city with a country hick town in Deep South USA and you'll have a idea of where Dukes is at. Based on the old TV show that many PS2 owners have probably never seen, the game has you in control of brothers Bo and Luke as they try and earn money to save the local orphanage.

The problem is that without a city teeming with people, exploring the comparatively empty Hazzard County is dull. A best-case scenario would be two other cars on screen at any given time, and that's only after vast periods of seeing nothing. When not roaming through the country, the game is structured in a series of race missions, either against the clock or other drivers, though the clunky controls don't allow much fun either.

Graphics-wise, it's passable. The cut-scenes and in-game visuals are decent enough for you not to complain, but you're not exactly going run into the street shouting their praises to the world. The soundtrack is all banjos

and heavy southern accents, which is quite entertaining, although mostly in a so-bad-it's-funny way.

The drawcards are its budget price and PG-friendliness. For parents (especially those who used to watch *The Dukes Of Hazzard*), this makes Dukes a more sensible purchase than *GTA III*. *Serious Sam* proved that budget games can be just as good as full-priced ones – this fails to do the same. **▲ Matt Sainsbury**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Decent but empty and repetitive areas pull it down
Sound	05	Exaggerated voice acting and banjo music amuse
Gameplay	04	Dull missions and an even duller free-roam mode
Lifespan	03	Just hope it's not your only PS2 game

As a budget game, it's far from terrible. It's still a long way from the quality of the blockbusters though.

05


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Taking on Goliath Microsoft's David McLean puts forward the case for Xbox

Lego Star Wars Go on, admit it – you want to play it too

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Recommended viewing for your PlayStation 2 home cinema system



"Hi! I heard your hedge needed some trimming..."

DVD OF THE MONTH

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: Special Deluxe Edition

Director: Marcus Nispel Starring: Jessica Biel, Eric Balfour, Jonathan Tucker, Mike Vogel, Erica Leerhsen, Andrew Brynarski, R Lee Ermey, David Dorfman
Distributor: Roadshow Rating: MA15+ Out: Now



FILM: Five young friends stop to pick up a frantic young hitchhiker while on a road trip through Texas in 1973. Moments later, she pulls out a gun and blows a hole through her own head.

Now, stunned witnesses – Erin (Jessica Biel), her boyfriend Kemper (Eric Balfour), bright Morgan (Jonathan Tucker), insensitive Andy (Mike Vogel), and sexpot hippie Pepper (Erica Leerhsen) find themselves with a moral dilemma. Should they dump the body or report the suicide to the police? Unfortunately, they pull over to the side of the road to make a decision near a house belonging to a clan of cannibals, including the chainsaw-wielding Leatherface (Andrew Brynarski) and a frightful sheriff (R Lee Ermey).

"I won't go back there, don't make me go back there," says one of the characters, and that's probably how most people feel – but not out of fear. Okay, Marcus

Nispel's remake isn't exactly *Bambi*, but it's certainly not the freakish, edge-of-your-seat fare audiences lapped up in the '70s. With so many genuinely scary movies released since the original, it's surprising anyone would consider tramping over such sacred ground. Besides, it's a lot harder to shock and scare an audience now than it was 20 years ago. It's all been done, and in the case of this film, much better. **5/10**

EXTRAS: Loads of commentaries – many insightful and impressive. Commentaries include ones from producers Michael Bay and Andrew Porm, executive producer Brad Fuller and co-chair/co-CEO of New Line Cinema, Robert Shaye, writer Scott Kosar, and cast Jessica Biel and Erica Leerhsen, Eric Balfour, Mike Vogel, Jonathan Tucker and Andrew Brynarski. **8/10**

VERDICT: The movie is average, but the disc is irresistible for those who value special features. If that's you, don't miss this one. **8/10**

SEVERED LIMBS!

They're really getting the hang of DVD extras now! There's an excellent making-of which covers nearly every aspect of the film from casting to the stunts, the scares and just how kooky R Lee Ermey is in real life. Also quite good is "Severed Limbs", a documentary that pieces together all the cut scenes, with Nispel explaining why each was dropped. A very novel way of getting folks to sit through it. There are also screen tests for three of the actors, TV spots, teasers, trailers, a gallery and an absorbing documentary on serial killer Ed Gein, who inspired the original film. Pretty awesome...



Police Academy: The Complete Collection

Director: Various Starring: Steve Guttenberg, G W Bailey, Bubba Smith, George Gaynes, David Graf, Leslie Easterbrook
Distributor: Roadshow Rating: M15+ Out: Nov 10



FILM: For some reason it has become trendy to not only dislike the Police Academy series but be outright hostile towards it. If sneering critics had their way, we'd all forget the original was not only a success, but an immense success.

Its popularity was not just another example of 1980s bad taste. While some of the laughs are a little dog-eared now, the underlying qualities that were its true appeal have not aged a day. Screenwriters Neal Israel and Pat Proft developed zany, well-drawn characters, which in turn were cast to perfection. G W Bailey, in particular, is addictive as the obstreperous Captain Harris – a comic performance that will never grow tired.

It's common knowledge that Police Academy went steadily downhill with each sequel (culminating in the certifiably awful seventh instalment), but no matter how clichéd the gags, these movies are just plain fun. If you can't find something to enjoy in them... well, there's probably a Lars Von Trier collection out there with your name on it. **4/10**

EXTRAS: A retrospective interview session with just about everyone from the original film (Kim

Cattrall a notable exception). The 30-minute running time suggests it was developed for pay TV, but it's an informative watch nonetheless. We learn, for instance, that the idea for the first movie was inspired by a real situation in San Francisco and that Marlon Ramsey based Hooks' voice on Michael Jackson! That said, too much time is spent reliving people's favourite scenes and it digs less dirt than a council worker on compo. If nothing else, it's worth watching to see Bubba Smith's APPALLING hairpiece. **2/10**

VERDICT: You can expect to pay over \$80 for the set, so it's an option for devout fans of the series only. But no doubt, these same fans would be willing to shell twice that! The bonus material does little to enhance its collectability. **2/10**

THE ORIGINAL AND BEST

Take a time warp for some original flavour! Director Hugh Wilson, producer Paul Malansky and a number of the cast talk take us back for a full commentary that all Police Academy fans will go nuts for. Recorded more than three years ago for the American audiences (yep, we've been neglected as usual) it has its moments of humour and trivia, but there's too much dead air and "I love this scene" to be satisfying – especially considering the number of participants.



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Logitech Cordless Controller

Manufacturer: Logitech Available: Now Price: \$79.95

If you've tangled one too many controller cords thanks to round robin *Soul Calibur II* tournaments then you'll be happy to hear that Logitech has finally nailed its cordless controller technology. Unlike its bulky earlier models Logitech's new controller is roughly the same size and weight of a regular Dual Shock 2. It takes advantage of 2.4GHz RF technology to allow up to eight players in the same room to use these controllers without interference over a distance of up to 30 feet away from the PS2. It comes packed with two AA batteries that can power up to 50 hours of gaming and a rumble feature that can be turned on or off.

VERDICT: Feels just as good as a regular controller, without the hassle of tangled cords. **9/10**



Topfield TF5000PVRt

Manufacturer: Topfield Available: Now Price: \$1099.95

If you've been wondering what all the fuss over digital TV is all about then now's the time to check it out. Topfield's set-top box allows you to watch crystal clear digital TV broadcasts in either regular or widescreen ratios. Best of all Topfield's box comes with a 120GB hard drive built in. This can be used to record up to 60 hours of TV or if

you're feeling tricky, you can use its ability to record two different TV shows at the same time. The hard drive also records a buffer so that you can pause and rewind live TV, then fast forward through the ads to get back up to real-time. Topfield's set-top box is a little pricey but it does have an amazing range of features and if the price is a

problem you can always turn the page for your chance to win one! OPS2 has five to give away...

VERDICT: It would have been nice if it also supported high definition broadcasts but you can't fault its features. Television hasn't had a serious revolution since colour, but digital TV will well and truly land soon. **7/10**

SUBSCRIBE

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It's the age old conundrum: you're going out to a meeting of the local horticultural society, so do you record *Backyard Blitz* or *Ground Force*? Hmm, tricky, but now you don't need to choose – with the Topfield TF5000PVRt you can record both shows at the same time!

The TF5000PVRt is a combined digital set-top box and hard disk recorder with twin TV tuners, so you can save two shows in crystal clear quality simultaneously – no tape required. The 120GB hard disk inside has enough room for 60 hours of high quality footage and can also be used to store MP3 music files or digital photos.

We've got five TF5000PVRt's to give away. All you need do to be in with a chance of winning one is follow the instructions on this page and subscribe to *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*–Australia!

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RE-BOOT

Better tactics than 100 monkeys playing 100 PS2s for a year!



As far as movie-to-game experiences go, Spider-Man 2 is one of the greatest translations we've ever seen. It manages to capture the flavour of the movie, add in enough new elements to keep gamers going for 10 or so hours of action and provide the best sense yet of actually being a superhero. What it doesn't do though, is offer up an easy gameplay experience – and that's where we come in. We've nuked out solutions to each one of the game's missions and supplied all sorts of useful tips and tactics to have you swinging with the best of them. Enjoy.

JAMES ELLIS
Tips Editor

IN RE-BOOT THIS MONTH...

86.....SPIDER-MAN 2.....	TACTICS
92.....THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN.....	TIPS
92.....NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND.....	TIPS
92.....SYMPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN.....	TIPS
92.....PSI-OPS.....	TIPS

TOP TIPS TO HAVE YOU SWINGING IN STYLE

SPIDER-MAN 2

Stick to our guide and you'll soon have Doc Ock beaten

GENERAL TIPS

Spider-Man 2 literally climbs all over the original. As opposed to boring, linear levels to explore, you now have the whole of New York City to swing through at your leisure. That said, a lot of what was difficult in the first game is still difficult in this sequel, most notably taking on large gangs of gun-toting thugs at the same time. Here are some general tips to help you with these common situations, as well as some of the other tough bits in the game.

■ DISARM WEAPONS

While your spider senses can pick up incoming bullets and tell you to dodge, you'll rarely have the time required to pull it off successfully. Furthermore, it's rarely a single bullet you have to look out for – some enemies, in fact, pack automatic weapons. To make things easier for yourself, try to disarm thugs of their weapons by tapping **A** when facing them. Now you'll have a much easier time with gang fights.

■ HAVE IMPACT WITH YOUR WEBBING

If thugs keep dodging your normal webbing then hold **□** and press **A** to fire off some impact webbing. These large balls of web are almost impossible for thugs to dodge. Once they're tied up you can disarm them, use your Web Hanger move, or perform any other combo you like. Try firing multiple balls of impact webbing into a group of thugs before you land and start to use your fists.

■ AVOIDING THE FRAY

You want to avoid being surrounded by multiple thugs. Even your dodge abilities can't always help you avoid damage from multiple opponents. Keep leaping, jumping and swinging around to change the angle of your attack and spread your enemies out.

■ SULTAN OF SWING

Try to come to grips with swinging as soon as you can as it'll help you when you've got to sprint from one side of the city to the other under a strict time limit. Note that when firing off a web line you'll attach to whatever surface you're currently facing. Also get used to controlling your momentum while swinging so you can swing around the corner of a building without having to fire off a new web line. Also note the different ways you have to swing when

going for height or speed. When going for height, make sure you charge your jump all the way and release it at the peak of your swing. When going for distance only charge your jump meter to around 75 per cent. For both, be sure to press sprint (**□**) while at the base of your swing for maximum results.

■ UPGRADES HELP

To aid you with everything from combos to swing speed, be sure to buy upgrades with your acquired HP from the stores around the city. The swing speed upgrades may not seem as exciting as dazzling new combos, but they make a huge difference in helping you get around the city. The other mandatory purchase is the Web Zip. This works differently to the Web Zip in the original game. Instead of just sucking you straight to a given point, it acts more like a catapult, helping you make distances you otherwise couldn't if you were using the standard swing.

■ LOCK-ON

At certain points in the game it's handy to lock the game camera onto your target. It's particularly handy when you're facing off against a boss, following the Black Cat through the city, or trying to retrieve a lost balloon for a child on the street below.

■ PRIORITIES

Always attempt the main missions for your chapter first before worrying about the problems on the street below. Stopping some thugs may only net you a couple of hundred HPs, while accomplishing a main mission can earn you a great deal more, getting you closer to the HP quota. Remember, Hero Points don't carry on from one chapter to the next.

– they're drop-dead easy to dispatch. Make sure you grab the speed upgrade from the store using your acquired Hero Points (HP). Note that new upgrades become available at the beginning of each chapter in the game. Subsequently, get to a store as soon as a new chapter begins to grab new Locomotion and Combat enhancements – it'll make the chapter easier.

CHAPTER 3: PUNCTUALITY IS THE THIEF OF TIME

Save your game as instructed, then race to your class. Along

CHAPTER 1: WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Bruce Campbell, the man whose tongue is wedged permanently in his cheek, returns to guide you through a quick tutorial. Here you'll learn about Spidey's basic abilities as well as how to read the game map.

CHAPTER 2: A DAY IN THE LIFE

In this next chapter there are some tutorials on web swinging as well as your first face-to-face encounter with some crooks

CHALLENGES

Beat challenges for Hero Points

Littered throughout the city are various challenges you can undertake. These typically involve a sort of obstacle course-like race through various parts of the city, and require supreme locomotion and swinging skills. If you defeat the time limit for a challenge, you'll then unlock a Mega Challenge, which is typically extremely difficult to beat. However, if you do manage to beat the game's time, you'll score some hefty HPs. It's probably a good idea not to attempt these Mega Challenges until your swing speed is at least at level 6.

It's possible to explore every inch of New York



the way, knockout the thugs and return the briefcase to its rightful owner. If you're having trouble with multiple thugs, remember to call upon your Spider Reflexes. When that's taken care of, rush off to class.

Note that you can check your to-do list to see the chapter's remaining objectives. Make sure you keep doing this so you're not wasting time stopping boring street crimes for minimal Hero Points as opposed to taking on some of the game's main obstacles and villains – they're worth a lot more! In each chapter you'll have to earn a certain amount of Hero Points to progress through the game, as well as purchase the aforementioned upgrades. You'll have to earn 2000 points in this chapter (see EARNING HERO POINTS).

As for the rest of this chapter, make your way to the pizza parlour, go inside, deliver the pizzas, and return to the parlour within the time limit. You'll then be greeted with a mission – meet up with Harry and MJ. Get to it quickly and move to the blue marker on your map. Afterwards, hit the street, and earn some HPs to complete your quota. Now head over to MJ's. You'll spot some art gallery thieves asking for a whuppln' on the way! Rush into the gallery and spank them sideways. Speak to Black Cat after the carnage has died down and she'll eventually take off to flaunt her own leaping skills. You must follow her. To make things easier for yourself, press Down on the d-pad to lock the camera onto her toosh. Remember to use your sprint jump (release a charged jump while sprinting) to cross huge gaps.

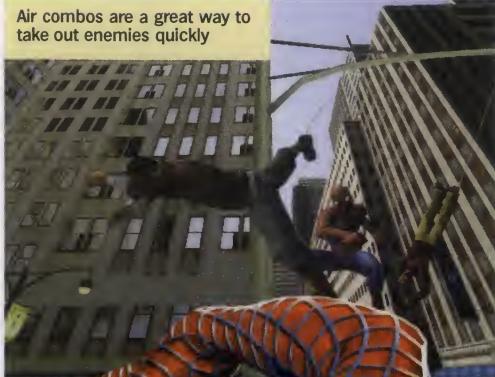
CHAPTER 4: ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Ol' Bruce will reiterate to you that every time a new chapter starts more upgrades will be available in the city stores for Spidey to purchase. Nip into a store now and buy the Level-2 Swing Upgrade.

Head to the Daily Bugle indicated on the game map with the trumpet symbol, (you should also be able to head toward the white icon on your screen). Drop down the vents, and talk to Jonah. After being "fired", Robbie will appear and give you an assignment. Note that you can keep coming back to the Bugle to see if Robbie has any more assignments for you, as they earn you HPs. Now it's off to snap those photos. You'll have to ascend to the highest point in the game to get them all; follow the markers and you'll be fine. Return the pics to the Bugle.

Next up you'll have to take on Rhino – your first boss encounter. Bruce will help you out though with some

Air combos are a great way to take out enemies quickly



Spidey gets serious about stalking his ex-girlfriend



REGAINING CONTROL

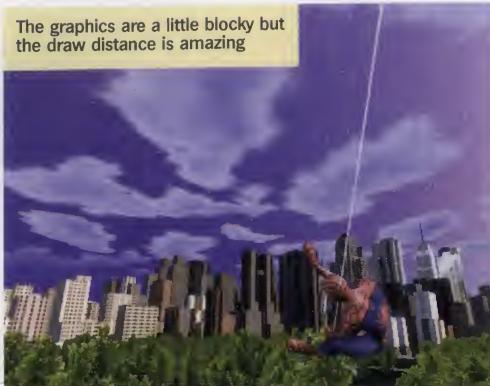
Don't take it lying down

At times you'll be hit with blasts from explosions or be thrown about by grumpy enemy bosses. It's important, particularly when taking on Doc Ock, to speed up your recovery by mashing the buttons when you're limp in mid-air or on the ground. If you don't, you might be hit again before you can get to your feet.

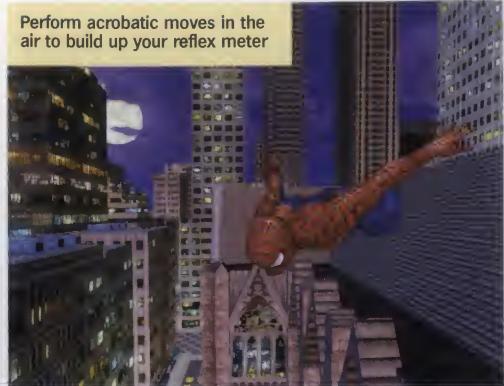
Getting back on your feet quickly is essential in fights



The graphics are a little blocky but the draw distance is amazing



Perform acrobatic moves in the air to build up your reflex meter



throw them when they're in your clutches). Spidey automatically aims his web at the nearest free criminal, so it's pretty easy to get ahead of Beck.

The following obstacle course isn't as easy. Take your time and watch the panels to see how they move. If you do fall to the ground, sprint and leap back to the start of the course. You'll be hit once, but you should still keep your chance of success alive. If you do get hit three times by Beck's ray gun, the game may allow you to start at a mid-course respawn point provided you've gotten far enough. If this occurs, you'll have to hit the switch closest to your respawn point again – it's important to remember this. Hit all the switches to end the challenge.

Exit the stadium, buy some upgrades, and earn the rest of your HP quota.

CHAPTER 5: A MEETING OF THE MINDS

Swing to the university marker to meet up with Harry. You'll then be introduced to Dr. Octavius in a cut-scene. Afterwards, purchase the grapple attack upgrade from a store if you haven't already. Now go about collecting the rest of your HP quota.

CHAPTER 6: CAT AND MOUSE

Start off by purchasing the Level-3 Swing Upgrade (and anything else you want) from the closest store. Head toward the yellow icons and collect them all. You'll then set off after the elusive Black Cat again. Now head to Mary Jane's apartment marked with the white icon before speeding off to the cinema.

CHAPTER 7: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

It's time for another Daily Bugle assignment. This time you'll have to head to the sports arena to take on Quentin Beck. You'll need the grapple attack here. For the first challenge, web and reel in the criminals then throw them into the green-lit pit (keep \textcircled{A} held down as you web the criminals up then, with \textcircled{A} held down, press \textcircled{C} to reel the crooks in, then \textcircled{C} to

CHAPTER 8: SUGAR AND SPICE

Purchase the Level-4 Swing Upgrade if you haven't already. Then go to Octavius' apartment marked with the white icon. You'll then have to dash across the city to Mary Jane's play. As you approach the theatre you'll be shown a cut-scene of an armed



robbery. Swing to the scene of the crime and take out the sniper on top of the building first. Chase the car down and dispatch the rest of the thugs. Spring back to the theatre for a cut-scene with Black Cat.

Follow her to the crooks and take them out. A lot of the thugs pack firearms though, so keep your distance and disarm them with your web (tap \textcircled{A}).

Earn the rest of your HP quota.

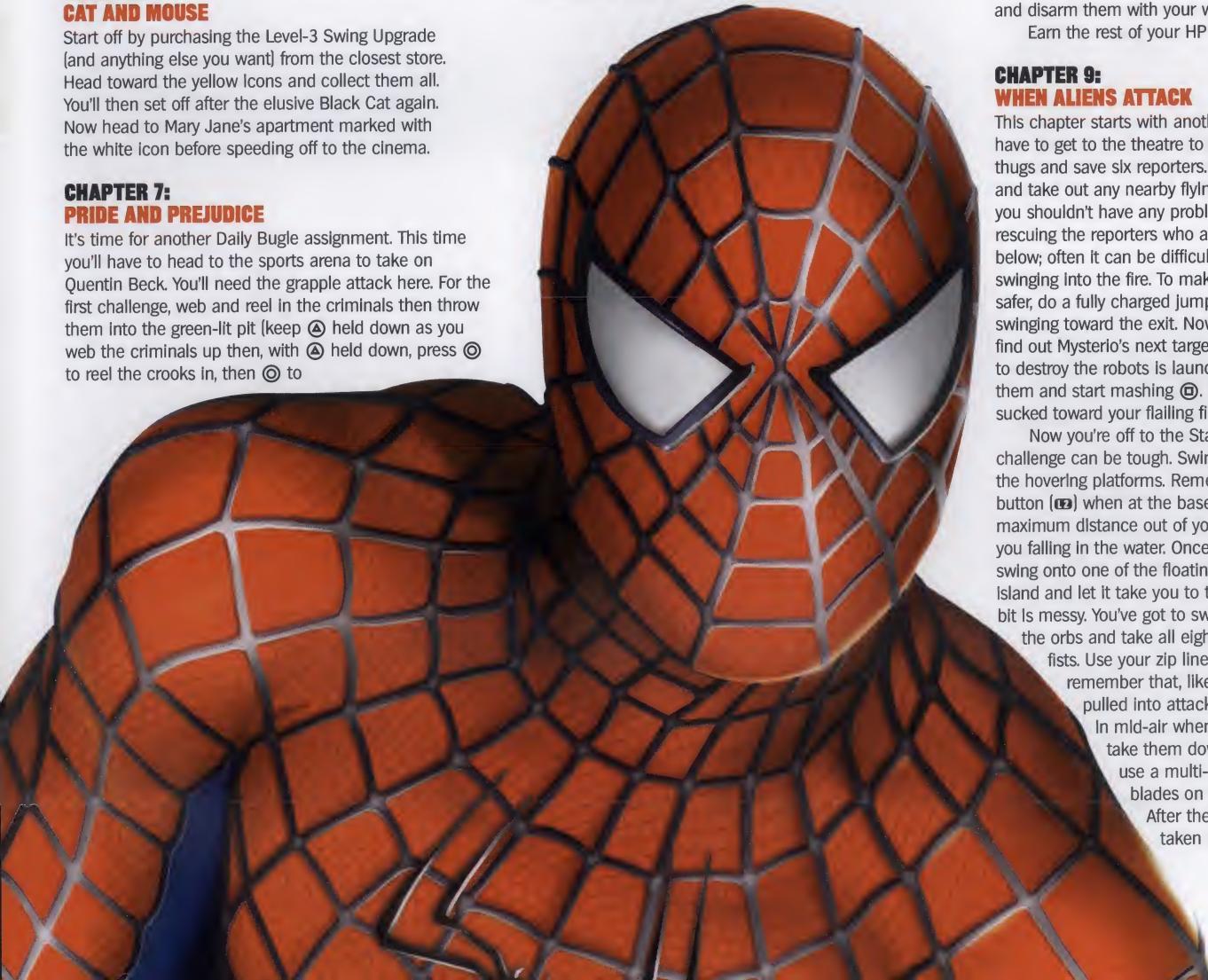
CHAPTER 9: WHEN ALIENS ATTACK

This chapter starts with another Bugle assignment. You'll have to get to the theatre to go up against Mysterio's thugs and save six reporters. Provided you keep moving and take out any nearby flying robots when convenient, you shouldn't have any problem. Just watch out when rescuing the reporters who are stranded on the stage below; often it can be difficult to swing to safety without swinging into the fire. To make your escape from the stage safer, do a fully charged jump straight up in the air before swinging toward the exit. Now, destroy all the robots to find out Mysterio's next target. Remember, all you need to do to destroy the robots is launch yourself into the air near them and start mashing \textcircled{A} . For some reason they get sucked toward your flailing fists.

Now you're off to the Statue of Liberty. This next challenge can be tough. Swing toward the statue using the hovering platforms. Remember to use the sprint button (\textcircled{B}) when at the base of your jump to get maximum distance out of your swing and help prevent you falling in the water. Once you get to Liberty Island, swing onto one of the floating platforms surrounding the Island and let it take you to the top of the statue. The next bit is messy. You've got to swing and zip line up to each of the orbs and take all eight of them down with your fists. Use your zip line when you can, and

remember that, like the flying robots, you'll be pulled into attack range if you start punching in mid-air when close enough. Once you take them down, swing up to the brain and use a multi-hit combo on it, dodging the blades on the torch platform as you go.

After the contraption is dead, you'll be taken back to the mainland.





SPIDER REFLEXES

More important than you realise

Your Spider Reflexes are great to use against bosses and gangs of gun-toting enemies. They also enhance your ability to dodge incoming attacks by granting you greater warning. However, your reflexes do wear down quickly. To conserve reflexes, use them to avoid danger and start a combo on an enemy, then turn it off while performing the rest of the combination of punches and attacks. The toughest enemies in the game are the walking mechs. These suckers take a lot to beat down and also pack some heavy weaponry. Make sure your reflexes are full before taking them on.

Tougher enemies are impossible without Spider Reflexes



Swing to the icon on your map and climb inside the apartment window. You'll soon find Mysterio's funhouse and have to take on a Mr Pop 'n' Hack. Use your Dodge moves and plenty of jumping to take him out. Move inside and take out the next batch of Pop 'n' Hacks. Continue and you'll get to a room with lots of mirrors and Spider-Man clones. Ignore the clones and set about destroying all the mirrors that have projectors behind them (every third mirror). You'll eventually find a way out of the room. Get out of the apartment to earn 2000 HPs.

CHAPTER 10: WHEN GOOD MEN GO BAD

Get to a store and buy the Level-5 Swing Upgrade and

anything else you want. Next, get yourself over to Octavius' demonstration at his apartment. You'll be whizzed to a cut-scene with the Doctor showcasing his fusion device. Unfortunately, things go wrong. You now have to punch and destroy four terminals located around the room. However, there's a pulsing electromagnetic shield that can really knock you about, as well as bolts of electricity you must avoid with your Dodge move. The shield's pattern changes after you destroy a console. Take your time, learn each pattern as you go, and use your zip line and jumping abilities to get to the panels quickly.

Reach the remaining HP quota and head toward Doctor Connors. Along the way you'll have to take on more of Mysterio's flying robots. After the cut-scene with Connors and Doc Ock, continue to Connors' lab. After dropping Connors off at the hospital, swing your way over to the Daily Bugle.

CHAPTER 11: THE UNDERWORLD OF CRIME

Go meet Aunt May at the bank. Doc Ock will burst in, and then it's all on! Try to take out his henchman before locking onto him with your camera (Down on the d-pad). Now watch his tentacles, when they glow that means there's a strike coming your way, so get ready to perform a Dodge. After you Dodge, fire your web (Ⓐ) while still being prepared to Dodge another four or five fast attacks in a row (it really is a button mash). When you tie all his arms down, give him a quick combo. He'll retreat with Aunt May. Smack out the thugs in the next room (watch their grenades) then head outside and follow the helicopter – you have to remain really close on its tail so try and attach your web to it if you can. Next up, get to Aunt May before the train does.

Buy some upgrades and earn the rest of your HP quota to complete the chapter.

CHAPTER 12: SHOCKING DEVELOPMENTS

Head back to your apartment, indicated on the map. You'll

receive a message from Jameson and have to speed over to his son's charity ball. Once you get the bad news about MJ, follow Black Cat to Shocker's hideout. Go Inside and take him on – he's easy. Keep swinging around the warehouse chasing Shocker. When you catch up to him, hit him with a flurry of punches till he starts charging a massive shock, at which point you should swing well out of his range. After he unleashes the shock, chase him down and rumble him again. Ignore the thugs when they come out. If you keep moving they shouldn't be a problem. Eventually Shocker will retreat after he dishes out some punishment to Black Cat.

Exit the warehouse and complete your HP quota.

CHAPTER 13: CLEANING THE SLATE

Go back to the Daily Bugle, buying some new upgrades on the way. After you've got the diplomat assignment off Jameson, head towards the blue icon on the screen. On the way you'll have to prevent Mysterio robbing a convenience store. Just run up and punch him. Now go back to the Bugle with your pictures. After exiting the Bugle, you'll run into a woman who's scared stiff of you. Head back to the Bugle to confront Jameson and you'll meet up with Black Cat. Follow her to another confrontation with Shocker, taking care of Shocker's goons on the way.

When you get inside Shocker's new lair you'll notice he's surrounded by a forcefield. When the fight starts, keep swinging around, using your Dodge move, until Cat discovers how to deactivate Shocker's forcefield. Simply swing to the opposite console that Cat accesses to turn off his forcefield then go in for the attack. At this point he fights similarly to the way he did in the first encounter. Get close to him, unleash some combos, then back off when he starts charging up his massive shock. Repeat the process to wrap up the encounter.

CHAPTER 14: BURNING BRIDGES

Next, you've got to dash to Mary Jane's play. Even if you make it in time, you'll still miss the play and have to bail

RECHARGING YOUR REFLEXES

It's all in the reflexes

As mentioned on page 91, the Stair Step Kicks Combo is the best move to recharge your Spider Reflexes. But what if you don't have it yet? Other ways to fill your reflex meter include swinging through the city performing all manner of spider-like exploits. Try to mix in some Wall Running (Sprint with ⌂ then press ⌂ while sliding down a wall) in with your swinging, and also purchase some acrobatic tumbles to perform while hurtling through the sky. Dodge and Counter-Attack moves are also effective.

Combat will build up your reflex meter



RE-BOOT

Mary Jane out of some trouble – but what are superheroes for, right? After saving one girly, you're going to head off to another. Move to the blue icon to hook up with your busty feline friend. It's another case of chase the pussy as you follow Cat around to a dodgy warehouse.

This next encounter is intense. You've got to take out a bunch of mechs and armed thugs. Try to take out the guards first, hiding behind the crates for cover from the mechs. Another idea is to grapple the guards and take them over the wall to knock them out one-on-one. To destroy the mechs, smash them from behind. If they're bunched too close together, use a combination of Spider Reflexes and hit-and-run tactics to inflict a small amount of damage on one mech before retreating and attacking from a new angle.

Track down Black Cat for a break-up conversation then head over to see MJ. Afterwards you'll be shown a cut-scene with Harry and the Insane Doc Ock – he's coming for you. For now, earn the rest of your HP quota.

CHAPTER 15: TO SAVE THE CITY

Swing to your apartment to hear a message from MJ then head to the diner. Next up is a chase to meet up with Doc Ock. He'll jump on top of a moving train before tearing the train's brakes out. Catch up to the train and jump onto the roof for another showdown with Doc Ock himself. Move close to him and get ready to Dodge his mechanical arms. You've got to use the same dodge-and-web tactics on his arms that you used in the bank in Chapter 11. When all four arms are trapped, move in for a single combo before backing off. Don't try to fit another combo in or he'll just grab you and give you a hiding. After you've smacked him around a few times, you'll be privy to another cut-scene.

After your conversation with Harry, swing down to Octavius' lab on the pier. Get ready for more biff! This time Doc Ock has an impenetrable forcefield. Don't try and engage him yet. Instead, swing around and turn off the nine switches littered around the lab. They're easy to get to with the exception of a switch up near the roof, and one underneath the floor, right above the water. Go for the latter first as if you make a mistake and have to restart, this saves you from having to hit all the switches again. Apart from Doc Ock, you've also got to deal with the

reactor spitting plasma at you. Be ready to press the Dodge button at all times. If you're having problems simultaneously dealing with both Doc Ock and the reactor's field, engage Doc somewhere out of reach of the field, tie his arms down, then go for the switches again, now only worrying about the field. After you've hit all the switches, his personal forcefield will power down. Then it's time for the final confrontation. It's the same deal as before – dodge, then web each of his arms before going for a combo. Just remember to get clear of him once you've hit him with the combo, as he'll try to grab you with one of his tentacles. Once you've smashed him up, you'll be treated to the game's final cut-scene.

CHAPTER 16: THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Now you've got to earn a staggering 50,000 HP! Get to work! Along the way, purchase the Level-7 Swing upgrade once you've got the 20,000 HP.

CHAPTER 17: THE SECOND DAY OF THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

Does it feel like the game is flogging a dead horse? Now you've got to purchase the Level-8 Swing upgrade. The problem is it costs 50,000 HP! Mind you, there are all those awards to attain – if one is so inclined.

EARNING HERO POINTS

A hero's job is never done

As well as stopping street crimes there are a bunch of other ways to earn Hero Points. You can go to Mary Jane's and ring her bell to undertake a Mary Jane mission, go to the Daily Bugle to see if Robbie has extra work for you, or try your hand at delivering some pizzas. Additionally you can set about exploring the city's many skyscrapers for Skyscraper tokens, or indoor areas (shown in colour on your mini-map) for hideout and exploration tokens. Street crimes may be the most obvious method but it's worth trying the others to mix the gameplay up.

Look for Skyscraper tokens littered around the city



It's possible to catch lifts on passing helicopters



They say funny things when you pull the string



That Spider-Man – he's so hot right now



This isn't a good time to run out of web fluid



A-GRADE UPGRADE

The following is a breakdown of the game's best moves and upgrades. You'll start off with some at the beginning of the game, but will have to buy the others as they become available and you earn enough Hero Points.

DODGE – COUNTER UPPERCUT

(→ + ⓧ ⓧ [when your head flashes], then ⓧ)

Surrounded by a gang of thugs throwing punches your way? Use this move to avoid a blow, then send one of the thugs into the air for an air combo, allowing you to get out of the way of melee attacks as well as dish out some punishment of your own.

GRAPPLE

(With ⓧ held down, press and hold ⓧ)

You need this move to access the Piledriver and other attacks. It's particularly useful in your first encounter with Quentin Beck when rounding up the criminals.

WEB RODEO

(Hold ⓧ then keep rotating the analogue stick in a 360 degree motion)

The great thing about this move is that in an open space it clears out every enemy around you. However, it can be tough to do. A lot of the time you'll start to rotate the analogue stick and will merely perform a Web Yank, throwing the enemy to one side. To avoid this, while webbing up an enemy, press ⓧ to re-centre the camera behind your back then move the stick directly to the left or right and begin the rotation.

AIR JUMP OFF KICK

(At any point in an air combo press ⓧ to kick yourself higher into the air)

Another important upgrade that helps you escape rough gangs of thugs on the street below. Use this after you dish out an air-combo to make sure you can swing away from the fray below.

CANNONBALL KICK

(Press ⓧ while swinging)

This can be tough to use, but if you get its execution right, it can also be highly effective in knocking a whole gang of closely grouped thugs onto their rumps. Lock the camera onto your target (Down on the d-pad) to help line up a king hit.

WEB HANGER

(ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ)

A bit of a novelty, but it allows you to permanently web an enemy up to a streetlight. You can finish them off while they're dangling in mid-air.

DIZZY STRIKE

(ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ)

This combo allows you to send a target into a stunned daze for some time, allowing you to thin out the number of immediate threats.

MULTI WEB HAMMER

(ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ)

What's particularly useful about this upgrade is that it has the potential to clear out surrounding enemies. While not as effective as the Air Rodeo, it's easier to perform.

JAW LAUNCHER

(ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ – during Spider Reflexes)

You want this move if only to access the Stair Step Kicks Combo below.

AIR PILEDRIVER

(Press ⓧ while grappling an enemy in mid-air)

Not only does this slam look great, but it dishes out some hefty damage to the victim.

STAIR STEP KICKS COMBO (JAW LAUNCHER REQUIRED)

(ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, then ⓧ rapidly – during Spider Reflexes)

Perhaps the coolest attack in the game, though you have to have your Spider Reflexes on to use it. Basically, you toss an enemy into the air then rain dozens of rapid kicks on their skull. However, while you're tapping on their dome you can actually turn your Spider Reflexes off and continue with the move in real time. Do this to earn the majority of your Spider Reflexes meter back. You can easily knock out an enemy by using this combo on them just once.

WHIRLWIND KICK

(After dodging, press ⓧ, ⓧ)

This clearing kick will become your main move against gangs of thugs. Powerful and fast, you'll take down multiple enemies in quick time.

RISING SHOULDER CHARGE

(Fully charge your Jump meter, then press ⓧ while sprinting)

Similar to the cannonball kick, but easier to perform, this move throttles groups of thugs by bowing them into the air.

MAX TRAP WEBS

(While webbing up an enemy with ⓧ, press ⓧ again to web another – up to four enemies can be webbed with the Max Trap Upgrade).

Again, this move makes taking on multiple enemies that much safer. Web up to four enemies, smack out the others quickly, then get ready to take on these guys as they start wriggling out of your binds.

CODE-U-LIKE

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND



At the main menu enter the following:

Unlock all drag tracks
→, ⊖, ←, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Unlock all drift tracks
←, ←, ←, ←, →, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Unlock all circuit tracks
↓, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Unlock all sprint tracks
↑, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ↓, ↓, ↓

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

Hold **□+△** in options and enter:

All reward cars
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Tripping mode
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Night time mode
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Blow up vehicles in one hit
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Faster cars
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Fastest cars
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Infinite car health
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Press horn to do a huge leap in your car
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

More camera angles
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

Grid mode
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

TRANSFORMERS

These codes need to be entered at Autobot HQ, on the 'Difficulty Select' screen:

For Turbo mode:
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

For infinite Powerlink:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

For infinite Stealth (when you have the Convert Minicon equipped):
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

For all Minicons:
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ←, →, ←, →, ⊖, ⊖

To complete the Alaska level:
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ←, ←, →, ←

To complete the Deep Amazon level:
←, →, ←, ←, →, ⊖, ⊖, Circle

To complete the Earth level:
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

To complete the Mid-Atlantic level:
⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖, ⊖

To complete the Starship level:
←, ←, →, ⊖, ⊖, →, →, ←

SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN



Unlock Budva bonus mission
Get Solo Par for Lorelei, Tokyo, Myanmar, and Zurich missions

Unlock Chechnya bonus mission
Get Solo Par for the two Yemen missions and Minsk

Unlock Italy bonus mission
Get Solo Par for the three Cairo missions

Unlock Kyrgyzstan bonus mission
Get Solo Par for the two Belarus missions

Unlock AU300 H-BAR weapon
Get Deputy Chief of Operations Rank

Unlock AU300 Mod-SMG weapon
Get Field Officer Rank

Unlock Combat Shotgun
Get Intelligence Agent Rank

Unlock G-17 weapon
Get Investigative Agent Rank

Unlock GAWS 12 Gauge weapon
Get Chief of Operations Rank

Unlock Jericho-41 weapon
Get Field Research Specialist Rank

Unlock M16 A1 weapon
Get Investigative Officer Rank

Unlock M1911 A1 weapon
Get Intelligence Officer Rank

Unlock M4 weapon
Get Investigative Operations Commander Rank

Unlock MAK-10 10mm weapon
Get Investigative Research Specialist Rank

Unlock Mark 23 weapon
Get Field Supervisor Rank

Unlock Shot Hammer weapon
Get Field Operations Commander Rank

Unlock Slug Defender weapon
Get Field Analyst Specialist Rank

Unlock SP-57 weapon
Get Intelligence Analyst Specialist Rank

Unlock Stavva M70 B1 weapon
Get Intelligence Operation Commander Rank

PSI-OPS



On Main Menu, highlight Extra Content and press **□** for the keypad.

Unlock All Powers
Enter 537893 on the keypad

Unlock Super PSI
Enter 456456 on the keypad

Unlock All Powers From Start
Enter 537893 on the keypad

Unlock Bulletproof Ability
Enter 548975 on the keypad

Unlock Unlimited Ammo
Enter 978945 on the keypad

Unlock No Head
Enter 987978 on the keypad

Unlock Arcade Mode
Enter 05051979 on the keypad

Unlock Co-op Mode
Enter 07041979 on the keypad

Unlock Dark Mode
Enter 465486 on the keypad

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CHEATS
PRESS 2

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CUSTOMER SERVICE
Press 2



PROMOTION

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Calls from public or mobile phones are higher.

PIN	GAME	CHEAT
22561	AFL Live 2004	State of Origin
85421	Slims: Bustin Out	Gnome cheat
85422	Slims: Bustin Out	All locations
85423	Slims: Bustin Out	All objects
85424	Slims: Bustin Out	All skins
85425	Slims: Bustin Out	Money
19671	NFS Underground	Unlock all Drag Tracks
19672	NFS Underground	Unlock all Drift Tracks
19673	NFS Underground	Unlock all Circuit Tracks
19674	NFS Underground	Unlock all Sprint Tracks
20177	LOTR: The Return of the King	All Upgrades
20178	LOTR: The Return of the King	Always Devastating
20179	LOTR: The Return of the King	Infinite Missiles
20180	LOTR: The Return of the King	Invulnerable
20181	LOTR: The Return of the King	Perfect Mode
20182	LOTR: The Return of the King	Restore Health
18481	Tony Hawk's Underground	Faster Speed
18482	Tony Hawk's Underground	Moon Gravity
18483	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Manuals
18484	Tony Hawk's Underground	Perfect Rail Balance
18485	Tony Hawk's Underground	Unlocks All Thug Moves
17071	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	Infinite Ammo
17072	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	Invulnerability
17551	Finding Nemo	Bonus Level
17552	Finding Nemo	End Credits
17553	Finding Nemo	God Mode
17554	Finding Nemo	Level Select
17531	True Crime Streets of LA	All Driving Upgrades
17532	True Crime Streets of LA	All Fighting Moves
17533	True Crime Streets of LA	All Gunplay Skills
17534	True Crime Streets of LA	Impound Garage Cars Unlocked
18971	The Simpsons Hit & Run	All Reward Cars
18972	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Infinite Car Health
18973	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Faster Cars
18974	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Jumping Car
18975	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Blow up Vehicles In one Hit
18976	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Night Time Mode
06846	Medal of Honour: Frontline	Bullet Shield Mode
06847	Medal of Honour: Frontline	Perfectionist
06848	Medal of Honour: Frontline	Snipe-A-Rama
11811	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Level Select
11812	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	All Special Features
11813	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Invincibility
07671	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Realistic Handling
07672	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Better Damage
15681	Bad Boys II	Unlock Everything
17531	True Crime Streets of LA	All Driving Upgrades
17532	True Crime Streets of LA	All Fighting Moves
17533	True Crime Streets of LA	All Gunplay Skills
17534	True Crime Streets of LA	Impound Garage Cars Unlocked
18730	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Unlock All Levels
18731	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Unlock Max Ammo
18732	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Bullet Shield Mode
18733	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Sniper Mode
18734	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	Silver Bullet Mode
10171	Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	All Power-Ups
10172	Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	All Warp Gates
10173	Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	All FMV Sequences
10174	Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	Alternate Credits
12271	Tomra Raider: Angel of Darkness	Level Skip
13471	Die Hard Vendetta	Invincibility
13472	Die Hard Vendetta	Flame On
13473	Die Hard Vendetta	Liquid Metal Textures
13474	Die Hard Vendetta	Big Heads
13475	Die Hard Vendetta	Small Heads
13476	Die Hard Vendetta	Exploding Fists
20341	Cat in the Hat	All Levels
20342	Cat in the Hat	Extra Life
20343	Cat in the Hat	Bonus Door Keys
03251	Max Payne	Level Select
03252	Max Payne	Health
04122	Turok Evolution	Weapons
04123	Turok Evolution	Level Skip
04124	Turok Evolution	Ammo
04125	Turok Evolution	Invibility
04121	Turok Evolution	Invincibility
06721	Baldurs Gate: Dark Alliance	Invincibility and Level warp
06722	Baldurs Gate: Dark Alliance	Super Character
05921	No One Lives Forever	Level Select
01391	World Rally Championship	Greater Power
01392	World Rally Championship	No Chassis
01393	World Rally Championship	Overhead View
01394	World Rally Championship	Underwater Graphics
20112	Tak and the Power of Juju	All Plants
20113	Tak and the Power of Juju	100 Feathers
20114	Tak and the Power of Juju	All Moonstones
20115	Tak and the Power of Juju	All Juju Power-Ups
20116	Tak and the Power of Juju	All Yorbels
10541	Midnight Club II	All Locations
10542	Midnight Club II	All Cars
12521	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	Refill Your Health
12522	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	Full Arrows/Axes
00321	Theme Park World	All Purchases Free
00322	Theme Park World	Golden Tickets
00323	Theme Park World	All Items Researched
05401	The Simpsons Road Rage	Halloween Mode
05402	The Simpsons Road Rage	New Year's Day Mode
05403	The Simpsons Road Rage	Thanksgiving Mode
05404	The Simpsons Road Rage	Christmas Mode
12580	007 Nightfire	Bigger Sniper Rifle Clip

gamestation

Your definitive guide to the ever-expanding library of PlayStation 2 games

So you've just bought a PlayStation 2, and you're immediately confronted by a dauntingly huge line-up of games to choose from at your local gaming store. Now what?

GameStation is OPS2's one-stop guide to getting an idea of what's hot and what's not. As time goes on and new games come out, we drop some of the older games that don't warrant being remembered, replacing them with newer games that score well in the reviews section.

As PlayStation 2 owners we really are spoiled for choice. There is a massive choice of AAA quality games – many of which are bound to fall under your radar. OPS2 is here to make sure that not too many of them manage to slip through your fingers.

If you just want to find the best of the best, look for the games that receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Enjoy your search!

GLOSSARY

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the latest and most up-to-date information but don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been around since the Atari 2600 by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.

AI: Artificial Intelligence.

Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.

Boarders: Snowboarders or games featuring the alpine sport.

Colin-op: Colin-operated arcade videogames.

Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame (also 'FMV').

CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.

Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.

D-pad: Direction pad on PS2 controller.

Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.

Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).

ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.

E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).

Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.

FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg Quake III).

Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.

High res: High resolution (graphics).

HUD: Head Up Display.

Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc.

Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc.

Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics.

L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.

Minigames: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.

Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.

PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.

Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.

RPG: Role-playing game.

RTS: Real-time strategy.

R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.

Sim: Simulation.

Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.

USB: Port to connect peripherals such as a keyboard to PS2.

**If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here.*

.HACK - VOL 1: INFECTION	★ OVERALL 06
An addictive new spin on the RPG genre that takes it into new territory.	
007 NIGHTFIRE	★ OVERALL 08
Aside from the occasionally iffy AI, this has enough variety to make a solid single player game, and the multiplayer gives it longevity.	
18 WHEELER	OVERALL 06
Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.	
2002 FIFA WORLD CUP	OVERALL 07
The World Cup version of <i>FIFA 2002</i> with more pizzazz, nifty effects for star players and a serious challenge at the highest difficulty level, but sadly lacking in game modes.	
ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER	OVERALL 07
Best <i>Ace Combat</i> yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions. Best with a flight-stick of some kind.	
AFL LIVE PREMIERSHIP EDITION	OVERALL 06
Plays a better game of footy, but it's not a vast improvement over its predecessor.	
AGGRESSIVE INLINE	★ OVERALL 08
There's more than enough inline action to keep you impressed and entertained until the next <i>Tony Hawk</i> says, "Buy me, dude!"	
AIRBLADE	★ OVERALL 08
Intricate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs – everything you could want hoverboarding to be. Back to the Future anyone?	
ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002	OVERALL 07
An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.	
AMPLITUDE	★ OVERALL 08
An addictive mixture of reflexes and music timing. Weak graphics but great gameplay.	
AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0	OVERALL 07
Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler <i>Wetrix</i> . Essentially it's <i>Tetris</i> with water. Weird, but worthwhile.	
ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS	OVERALL 07
It isn't original but <i>Arc the Lad</i> is a welcome addition to the list of next-generation RPGs.	
ARMORED CORE 2	OVERALL 07
Infinitely-tweakable first-person mech shooter. Not for the casual gamer after a quick fix, but perfect for those who love their sims.	
ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE	OVERALL 02
Very dull helicopter game. Hardly surprising from arguably the worst series of games to grace a console.	
ATHENS 2004	OVERALL 06
The perfect multiplayer game for the next month or two. It's not a classic sports game though.	
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2	★ OVERALL 08
More of the same, with new tracks, riders, racing modes and plenty of good old fashioned fun.	
AUTO MODELLISTA	★ OVERALL 08
The love-child of cel-shaded graphics and <i>Gran Turismo</i> . Despite its cartoon appearance, this is a fairly serious racing game.	
BACKYARD WRESTLING: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME	OVERALL 06
When they titled this brawler <i>Don't Try This At Home</i> – did they mean the game?	
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II	OVERALL 07
Worthwhile if you're after a hack 'n' slash with D&D style, but the game shows its age worse than Cher.	

YOUR KEY TO SHORTLIST

Gold
Only for games that scored the elusive 10/10.

Silver
Awarded to games with a mighty 9/10.

Bronze
Given to games that scored an impressive 8/10.

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL	★ OVERALL 08
Compelling and original. It manages to cross multiple genres and is bizarre, unique and engaging all at once.	
BLOODRAYNE	★ OVERALL 08
<i>BloodRayne</i> is an explosion of sex, action and violence. It's not going to tax your mind but it's so much fun you won't care.	
BUFFY 2: CHAOS BLEEDS	OVERALL 07
Full of action and adventure, <i>Chaos Bleeds</i> is a worthy addition to the <i>Buffy</i> legacy.	
BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT	★ OVERALL 08
An even more intense racing experience than its predecessor. <i>The Fast And The Furious</i> in a video game.	
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	★ OVERALL 10
Expands on everything previously achieved and manages to further innovate. This gem will appeal to more than just car nuts.	
CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE	★ OVERALL 09
Better whip and dungeon action than Larry Wachowski's last all-nighter at the Hellfire Club.	
CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH	★ OVERALL 08
While it doesn't reinvent the <i>Baldur's Gate</i> wheel, it does refine it so that even RPG haters will be charmed.	
CLUB FOOTBALL	★ OVERALL 08
The second best soccer game on PS2. Superior to the <i> FIFA</i> games but <i>PES</i> still gives it a thrashing.	
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4	★ OVERALL 09
One for experts and newbies alike, <i>Colin 4</i> is a superlative rally sim with a tank full of fun.	
CONFlict: DESERT STORM II	★ OVERALL 08
It's not perfect but it improves on its predecessor by a long shot. War may be hell but this certainly isn't.	
CONFlict: VIETNAM	★ OVERALL 08
A quality 'bullet ballet' look at the Vietnam war. No subtlety here, but damn, it's fun.	
CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER	OVERALL 07
A fantastic trip down memory lane for old school veterans, but <i>Contra</i> may confuse or confound the contemporary gamer.	
CRAZY TAXI	★ OVERALL 08
Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.	
CRISIS ZONE	OVERALL 07
A solid arcade blaster which is still a recognisable <i>Time Crisis</i> release, with some welcome variation. The strategy and weapon selection system in <i>Time Crisis 3</i> outweigh the novel features here though.	
DANCE UK	OVERALL 07
Great songs (Junior Senior, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Run DMC), excellent add-ons (non-slip mat, karaoke headseat) and great value. Well worth a buy – and it'll get you back in shape!	
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX	OVERALL 07
Top sweaty disco fun, marred by a flimsy selection of songs. All together now – big fish, little fish, cardboard box.	
DARK CHRONICLE	★ OVERALL 09
If you've finished <i>FFX</i> and need a new fix, look no further. This is top-tier RPG fare, an essential purchase.	
DEF JAM VENDETTA	★ OVERALL 08
Some more options would have made this a true champion, but it's still a worthy contender. <i>SmackDown</i> watch out!	
DEUS EX	★ OVERALL 09
The thinking man's action shooter and genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Superb.	
DEF JAM VENDETTA	★ OVERALL 08
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The thinking man's action shooter and genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Superb.	

**DEVIL MAY CRY**

Melding battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet? Definitely.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

Die-hards may cry at the new direction, but there's still enough gorgeous style and firearms in DMC2 to satisfy action junkies.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE

Just as fun as any other skater out there, just skewed toward the youngsters.

DISNEY'S THE HAUNTED MANSION

Aimed at younger audiences, so it's neither terribly complicated or difficult, but when all's said and done it's simple and addictive. Well-rounded and worth a few hours of exploration.

DJ DECKS & FX: HOUSE EDITION

Requires a great deal of creativity, patience and coordination, but it's a good starting point for budding DJs.

DRAKENGARD

An action-RPG featuring dragon-based shooting sections and beat-em-up swordplay. Repetitive and simplistic gameplay make this little more than a brawler, but it is addictively appealing.

DRIV3R

Fast cars, slick shooting, huge cities and cinematic action make this one of the best action games on PS2!

DYNASTY TACTICS 2

Dynasty Tactics 2 is purely one for the more masochistic strategy gurus. You know who you are.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS

Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends is strictly one for the beat-em-up fans. Just don't call it mindless.

ENDGAME

Sets a new standard in the lightgun shooter genre: innovative, refreshing and most of all, a tonne of fun.

ENTER THE MATRIX

Despite a painful lack of depth ETM is an enjoyable package for anyone after another dose of Matrix mayhem.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the bin.

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL

ESPN NBA Basketball slam dunks the competition with its slick presentation and innovative modes.

ESPN NFL FOOTBALL

If this game's quality was put into a local game, the results would be incredible. Until then, go for the stars and stripes.

ESPN NHL HOCKEY

A fast flowing game with plenty of depth. A no-brainer for hockey fans but a still a solid game for everyone else.

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

EverQuest Online Adventures offers rewards for the persistent, but it can be a pretty tough slog getting there.

EVIL TWIN

Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, so-so animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.

EXTERMINATION

Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.

EXTREME-G 3

A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some 'inspiration' from the Wipeout series.

EYE TOY: PLAY

Forget the fact that it's marketed at casual gamers; give it a try, because when it comes to Eye Toy, seeing is believing.

EYE TOY: GROOVE

Groove is a victim of the diversity of its predecessor. The lack of variety offered by this dancing title undoubtedly narrows its appeal.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE

At last, an F1 game that makes a priority of excitement and thrills over worthy but dull simulation.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

The best FIFA yet but it's miles behind PES3. It has all the bells and whistles, but the gameplay is still lacking.

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

If Fight Night 2004 were a boxer, it would quite rightly quip, "I am the greatest!"

FINAL FANTASY X

Nothing else needs to be said about this brilliant RPG. A classic Square adventure with next-gen presentation and production.

FINAL FANTASY X-2

FFX-2 is a huge, sprawling RPG adventure that is well worth the attention of even the most casual fan.

FORBIDDEN SIREN

This game belongs on the shelf of every survival horror buff. Hell - it belongs on every gamer's shelf.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Slight imperfections are swamped by an utterly addictive and clever game experience. You must play this.

FUTURAMA

With a bit more of polish this could have been shinier than Bender's metal ass.

FUR FIGHTERS

Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotguns blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.

GHOSHTHUNTER

It doesn't quite live up to its [huge] potential but it's original, scary, exciting and well worth a look.

HOST RECON

A squad-based first person shooter that suffers from a cumbersome interface for ordering troops about, often degenerating into arcade-style run-and-gun gaming.

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

GITAR HERO MAN

If you have a PS2 collection, you should definitely have at least one game like this one in there! Check it out.

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA

An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Not quite as good as its neon-soaked, '80s prequel but it's still fantastic fun and can now be found for bargain prices.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

Better than GTA 3 Cars, crooks, coke, and chaos with total freedom to do what you want. A must have for any gamer, serious or not.

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

If you didn't know already, GT3 is the greatest racing game in the world. Speed down to the store and buy it now.

GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT: 2002 TOKYO-GENEVA

A more accessible version of GT3, with concept cars. Perfect for those who just want to race, rather than play mechanic.

GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE

Has the distinct feel of being a demo, but will definitely keep racing freaks happy until Gran Turismo 4 hits shelves.

GREGORY HORROR SHOW

A truly ghoulish treat for fans of the survival horror genre who fancy something a little different.

G-SURFERS

Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

GUILTY GEAR X

Pushes hard at beat-em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

GUNGRAVE

Bizarre Manga Inspired shooting game with gorgeous visuals, but a distinct lack of depth to back up all that eye candy.

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

A mech shooter for robot obsessive-types everywhere.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN**HARRY POTTER: QUidditch World Cup****HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP**

The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in respondent form. An essential purchase.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN**HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN**

Stock standard elements and easy gameplay, but still one of the better examples of this kind of game.

HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP**HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP**

Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup is an entertainingly original title, but lacking in variety and challenge.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

A disturbingly realistic take on living the life of a hired killer. Not one for the squeamish, but it contains brilliant gaming.

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

Patient assassins will be rewarded with creative gameplay, but action junkies might find the pace a bit too slow.

INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB**INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB**

High adventure 3D platform gaming let down by some unforgivable technical issues.

I-NINJA**I-NINJA**

While I-Ninja is packed with varied gameplay, its original elements are largely superfluous. Worth a rent though.

JAK II: RENEGADE**JAK II: RENEGADE**

Darker and more challenging than its predecessor, Jak II is the best platform game we've ever seen!

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY**JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY**

A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot that introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING**JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING**

Looks and plays just like the films. Maybe a little too Metal Gear Solid-like but it's perfect popcorn action.

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH**JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH**

A little lightweight but the multiplayer modes and arcade missions keep Dredd out of jail.

JUICED**JUICED**

There's nothing wrong with Juiced, but with a line-up of better racers coming in 2004, it's only for the hardcore.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO**KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO**

A padded-out training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighter's otherwise rather limited nature.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER**KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER**

A bit too similar to Tony Hawk for our liking, but still the best surfing game around.

KILL SWITCH**KILL SWITCH**

As third-person shooters go, it's quite a lot of fun. Just don't go in expecting the next Splinter Cell.

KINGDOM HEARTS**KINGDOM HEARTS**

A beautifully produced RPG with Disney and Square characters. Don't let the kiddie vibe fool you, this one's very tough.

KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL**KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL**

Cute and cheerful platformer featuring the lovable glove-eared blue cat-rabbit hybrid. Fun stuff.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001**KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001**

A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not a match for Rocky though.

KYAA: DARK LINEAGE**KYAA: DARK LINEAGE**

A well-rounded platforming experience. Missing a few bells and whistles but very respectable fun.

LARGO WINCH**LARGO WINCH**

Based on a French comic character, this spy game is too linear, and lacks the interactivity that is needed to maintain a gamer's attention.

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE**LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE**

Legacy of Kain: Defiance is a fitting new chapter. Huge, bloody and pretty. Get ready to spill some blood.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING**LEGENDS OF WRESTLING**

'Violent ballet' with a shortage of modes and options. There are much better recreations of Pro wrestling.

LE MANS 24 HOURS**LE MANS 24 HOURS**

Accessible for gamers daunted by slim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills.

BRONZE**BRONZE**

PlayStation 2



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING ★ OVERALL 09

Meaty button-mashing for the masses. Movie-to-game licenses are almost never this good. And it's a two-player game.

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

A hype-free, classy intermesh of different styles makes for one of the most compelling games of the year.

MADDEN NFL 2004

Not just for those who already love padding-up, this is a great game, whatever your tastes.

MARIA

Maria is a slick title that could have been a classic if the driving sections weren't so dull. Close but no cigar.

MANTHUNT

Manthunt is a solid, enjoyable stealth-em-up with utterly engaging gameplay. Not one for the kiddies, however.

MASHED

The perfect multiplayer racer, but make sure you've got a MultiTap and three friends!

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN

Much more accessible than its prequel, with an even more engaging plot.

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

A game? A movie? MOH is a gruelling experience that packs the best of both worlds.

METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM

If you love blowing stuff up then this will do more than whet your appetite for destruction.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, gripping story.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

Incredibly comprehensive Metal Gear package for newbies but MGS2 owners will struggle to find \$10's worth.

MICROMACHINES

Nothing particularly 'next-gen' about this instalment of the series, but an excellent racing diversion nonetheless.

MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES

Beer Tapper alone is worth the \$40. Trust us, when this Beer Touches your lips it tastes so good! A great retro collection.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - OPERATION SURMA

Captures the stealthy stuff perfectly but ignores the other MI staples – car chases and hot chicks!

MOTO GP 2

A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race replay facility.

MOTO GP 3

A little repetitive and far too similar to the last two games. Still, it's the best motorbike game on the system thus far.

MTX: MOTOTRAX

Despite a few disappointing features, MTX Mototrax is worth wearing some fluorescent leathers for.

MUPPET PARTY CRUISE

All your favourite Muppets battling it out in a series of wacky multiplayer mini-games. Despite some problems, Muppet Party Cruise is still great fun to party with and worthy of an all-nighter.

MUSIC 3000

A mightily authoritative music title, which works as a fun diversion or a serious tool. Unmissable for wannabe bedroom artists.

MX UNLEASHED

A must for petrol heads. Motocross games are heading in the right direction with MX Unleashed.

NBA 2K3

Not only realistic, but packed with plenty of features as well, offering a wide selection of game modes.

NBA LIVE 2004

Noticeably better than 2003, but how much more can EA cram into their sports games?

NBA STREET VOLUME 2

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 07

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 07

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

GOLD PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 10

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

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SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 09

JUMPING JACK FLASH

A wacky old PSone title that's worth digging out again



JUMPING FLASH 2

As far as crazy Japanese games go, the two Jumping Flash titles were some of the craziest – but they still stand up as being completely unique, even today. You, as the pilot of a giant robotic rabbit called Robbit, had to jump around masses of floating platforms and the rooftops of giant skyscrapers rescuing Muu Muus (cute little mushroom things that go "Muul! Muul!") against a time limit. Viewed from a 3D first-person perspective, every time you jumped, your view would turn to look straight down at your feet, giving you a real sense of vertigo as you made mile-high jumps, and showing you just how far back down the level you would fall if you messed up. The games weren't huge, and were extremely frustrating at times, but there's not been anything made since that's even remotely similar – check 'em out if you get the chance!

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

Sexy, in A1 nick, goes like a greased rat up a drain pipe, ground shaking stereo, no previous owners. It's a steal.

NFL 2K3

This is the game to own for anyone into American football thanks to its ultra-realistic graphics and gameplay.

NFL STREET

Forget street cricket, NFL Street is so fun that it'll have kids playing it on the streets, yelling "go long".

NHL 2004

PS2's finest NHL romp. You'll enjoy this even if you think Wayne Gretzky is some kind of Polish soup.

NIGHTSHADE

Another hard and fast does of ninja action. It's perfect for anyone who's followed Shiroki from way back when.

ONIMUSHI BLADE WARRIORS

Decent four-player fighting game featuring Onimusha characters. If you have a multi-tap, or a thirst for demon slaying, this is well worth it.

ONIMUSHI: WARLORDS

Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though.

ONIMUSHI 3: DEMON SIEGE

Epic time-travelling samurai adventure starring Jean Reno that's destined to become classic, in anyone's books.

OPERATION WINBACK

Lacks variety, but still an enjoyable stealth shooter; nevertheless.

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

Rhythmic action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION

It's not going to dethrone any of the current champions in the genre, but it's good chilled-out fun for a while.

POLICE 24/7

Basic cop-shot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-'em-up.

PRIDE FC

The new king of the ring! Pride FC is the most realistic fighting simulation available on any system to date. Great stuff!

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME

Prince? More like the King. Ubisoft has crafted one of the greatest PS2 adventure titles yet!

PRISONER OF WAR

Escaping from POW camps is all well and good, but you remain a prisoner of often rigid game objectives. Even so, this is a bold, compelling adventure game.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

If you know who Kewell is you must own this. The best soccer sports and multiplayer game on your PS2.

PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

Quite possibly the scariest game ever made, and it also plays superbly.

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

Takes the third-person shooter genre, levitates in the air and makes it spank itself involuntarily.

QUAKE III

In four-player, this FPS is solid multiplayer fun. A technical tour de force, it runs smoothly and looks absolutely gorgeous.

RATCHET & CLANK

Pure platforming bliss from the company behind the original Spyro the Dragon titles on the PSone.

RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED

Everything you could want in a sequel. It plays brilliantly and though it lacks innovation it's still a real charmer.

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

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BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

SILVER PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

BRONZE PlayStation 2 ★ OVERALL 08

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

Rayman offers plenty of armless fun but he's no match for Ratchets or Racoons.

RED DEAD REVOLVER

The classic western is resurrected with a double-barrelled dose of action and fun.

RED FACTION

Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Quake III.

RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK

Hardcore Res Evil types will love it no matter what. The rest of us will want to know where the rest of the game is.

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Only the high standards of the FPS competition prevent this from being a truly essential buy.

REZ

Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay. Unique, and refreshing.

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

This is a functional game intent on converting gamers to its serious discipline: the "true" rally experience.

RISE TO HONOUR

This is as close as you can get to being Jet Li without spending a decade in a Shaolin temple.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY

A cel-shaded shooter that brings the classic anime to life, but is held back by a decidedly clunky control system.

ROCKY

The best boxing title available for PS2. Has a great story mode that takes the player through the movies.

R-TYPE FINAL

An old-skool shoot-'em-up fan's dream, but inconsistent play won't win legions of new fans. Makes up for being a little short with oodles of challenge and copious amounts of unlockables.

RUGBY 2004

Covers the entirety of the sport well but fails to capture the true feel of it.

RUGBY LEAGUE

An entertaining game which neglected NRL fans can finally enjoy. Long-awaited, but very satisfying!

SECOND SIGHT

Stylish, gripping and great fun. A truly rewarding game that's definitely worth looking into.

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

Mindless violence at its golden best. Fast, frantic, action-packed, witty, gun-ho, noisy, dumb blasting!

SHINOBI

Shiroki is the kind of frantic, shallow, old school arcade game we don't see enough of anymore. A fast and bloody good time.

SHREK 2

It's won't change your life, but Shrek 2 will make the day of game-savvy eleven-year-old boys who like to giggle.

SILENT HILL 2

One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one game.

SILENT HILL 3

The nastiest game on PlayStation 2 – we dare you to play it!

SILENT SCOPE 2

A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.

SINGSTAR

Karaoke with an edge. This gem is set to change your loungeroom forever.

SKY ODYSSEY

A flight sim where you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.

**SLED STORM** OVERALL 06

A maxed-out, splashy remake of the PSone racing classic, very much in the SSX mould.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2 OVERALL 07

Not a bad tennis game by any stretch. Unfortunately we wanted to see a few more aces served up. Tennis fans would be better off going for the superior Virtua Tennis 2.

SMUGGLER'S WAR: HOSTILE TERRITORIES OVERALL 07

Impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS ★ OVERALL 08

Finally! This is it! The online game we've all been waiting for!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2**SONIC HEROES** OVERALL 07

Sonic Heroes is a solid platformer that pays homage to its classic routes but the ol' hedgehog has failed to evolve ...

SOUL CAIBUR 2 ★ OVERALL 10

Finely crafted gameplay, stunning visuals and a high level of polish make SCI an essential purchase.

GOLD
PlayStation 2**SPIDER-MAN 2** ★ OVERALL 09

The best superhero game ever! Lovers of action-adventure or Spider-Man need this now.

SILVER
PlayStation 2**SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY** OVERALL 07

If you're sick of characters crapping on and on in cut-scenes then this will be right up your alley.

SSX 3 ★ OVERALL 09

Delivers an avalanche of adrenalin rushing action, unlike any other snowboarding title out there.

SILVER
PlayStation 2**STARSKY & HUTCH** OVERALL 07

Given the lack of gameplay variety this cop caper shouldn't be as consistently enjoyable as it is.

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER OVERALL 07

Gorgeous to look at, taking the gamer into the Star Wars universe, but is let down by repetitive gameplay.

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS OVERALL 07

One for the Star Wars collectors, and a great battlefield in its own right. Shallow but still worth investigation.

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER ★ OVERALL 09

Mesmerising 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. Great fun.

SILVER
PlayStation 2**STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING** OVERALL 05

Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.

STATE OF EMERGENCY OVERALL 06

A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot.

STREET FIGHTER EX3 OVERALL 06

A decent enough 2D/3D fighting game, but is milking the series to death. There are better 2D fighters from the same company.

STREET HOOPS OVERALL 06

More about collecting fancy duds than having a decent game of basketball, which is why this hoops title misses the mark.

STUNTMAN ★ OVERALL 08

Won't have the wide appeal of the Driver games due to its difficulty, but it's an ingenious concept that thrills and entertains.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2**SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL** OVERALL 07

The best crack at beach volleyball we've seen, but nothing to really set your gaming soul on fire.

SUMMONER 2 ★ OVERALL 08

Follow-up to the RPG launch title. More action oriented than the original, but still an epic adventure for fans of fantasy.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2**SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE** OVERALL 04

A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI OVERALL 07

Sword of the Samurai is a slow, ponderous, but intelligent game that combines strategy with gore.

TARZAN FREERIDE OVERALL 04

Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work.

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT★ OVERALL 08

Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves make it a worthwhile purchase.

TEKKEN 4★ OVERALL 09

Continuing the tradition of fighting game excellence. The first Tekken game to include free-movement.

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN★ OVERALL 08

An infusion of ninja style and killer gameplay across nine sumptuous levels. A great return to form for a classic title.

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINESOVERALL 06

Like Arnie, this game is a likeable dinosaur. Big guns and explosions but last-generation gameplay.

THE GETAWAY★ OVERALL 09

Sony's answer to Grand Theft Auto, with a decidedly darker and nastier storyline. Offers an amazingly life-like replica of London.

THE HOBBITOVERALL 07

The Hobbit is a game devoid of challenge and originality, and strictly for the younger Tolken fans.

THE HULKOVERALL 07

Not a smash-hit; but not damaged goods either. An enjoyable beat 'em up; shame about those stealth sections though.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN★ OVERALL 08

Combine the show's best elements with the best of GTA and you've got an instant, charming winner.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGEOVERALL 06

It's Crazy Taxi but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT★ OVERALL 08

Bustin' Out is slicker than the last game but without enough gameplay enhancements to make it essential.

THE SUFFERING★ OVERALL 08

Fans of action and/or horror should definitely NOT miss this one. It's an adventure you won't forget in a hurry.

THE THING★ OVERALL 08

Not only does it do justice to the classic horror film, but also introduces fear and trust issues to the survival-horror genre.

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVEOVERALL 07

An impressive adventure which is only let down by weak combat and unimaginative enemies. Doesn't quite have the impact of a meteorite, but will still prove a boon for X-Files fans.

THIS IS SOCCER 2004OVERALL 07

The pros outweigh the cons but the cons are annoying. TIS is not as good as Pro Evo 3, but it's certainly closing in.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004★ OVERALL 08

The best golf game on PS2, but we're holding our breath for next year's online version.

TIME CRISIS 3★ OVERALL 08

Action-packed arcade bullet-fest with plenty of lure for the casual player. Very similar to Time Crisis 2 though.

TIMESPLITTERS 2★ OVERALL 10

Takes the multiplayer from TimeSplitters and adds heaps of options. Major visual upgrades, i-Link for 16-player games – the works!

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM★ OVERALL 08

As a budget-priced tactical shooter, Jungle Storm is an absolute bargain. Spend the savings on face paint.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3OVERALL 07

It falls short of being brilliant. If only it had gone that extra mile. Fingers crossed for next time.

TOM CLANCY'S SPINTER CELL★ OVERALL 10

Move over Snake, Sam's the new special agent in town! Splinter Cell is an innovative game with some very cool touches.

TOM C'S SPINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW★ OVERALL 09

Eight new missions, superb multiplayer and some extra features make Pandora Tomorrow a brilliant package.

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS★ OVERALL 08

A little on the slow side but there's no doubt Lara's appeal. The original superstar is back!

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND★ OVERALL 09

Neversoft has turned the Hawk series into a Vice City-style adventure. And they've lost none of the charm doing it.

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INSIDE GAMING

OPS2's snoop, Naz, sneaks into the Hollywood gaming studios for the scoop on *San Andreas*

Naz: CJ, you're the star of *GTA: San Andreas* – easily the biggest game of 2004. Do you have the best job in the world or is the pressure to pull off a blockbuster performance too much?

CJ: What the hell are you talking about, you little bitch? I don't feel pressure – I deliver it. And if you don't get out of my face with your stupid questions, right now, I'm going to hack your pathetic little peanuts off with this machete here and feed them to my dogs.

Naz: Erm... I didn't mean any offense, Mr J. All I meant was, how are you enjoying working on *San Andreas*?

CJ: Well, I'd be having a kick ass time if it wasn't for those Rockstar ball-lickers asking me to pull off crazy stunts every other day. I swear, I'll just be chillin' in my trailer's hot tub with my bables, then before I know it I'll have same limp-prick production assistant rapping on my door wanting me to haul my ass out for another car chase or something. I'm a frigging gangsta, not some lightweight stunt guy.

Naz: You don't have to worry about anyone thinking you're lightweight.

CJ: You know it, bitch. Last week I got onto the set to find out they were shooting some hicksville countryside mission where I had to knock six dudes out bare-handed, grab a stupid briefcase, jump onto a frickin' ATV and burn off into a forest. Bitch, I was flying between those trees like I was friggin' Luke Skywalker. Then I had to jump across a bridge as it was collapsing and drive up a blg ass mountain before getting into a helicopter. A frickin' hellcopter, man. As if I can get a helicopter off the ground?

Naz: Is that because you're such a fat ass?

CJ: What the f@#% did you just say?

Naz: No, no. I said you're "ph" phat. You're too cool to have to fly your own helicopter.

CJ: I hear that. I just sort of winged it though when I got in, but there was a scary minute when that chopper was going down faster than one of my sugar babies in the sack! And if it's not crazy stunts I'm being called back to the motion capture studio to help those tech heads re-do some animation that they should have gotten right the first time. I'm a 'one take' kind of guy. I don't have time for those hopeless pussies to get it right.



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